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ABSTRACT

These four issues of the quarterly publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network in Canada are each devoted to a separate aspect of literacy and literacy education. In addition to an editorial and series of articles on the issue topic, each issue includes book reviews and network news. Some issues also include interviews and annotated bibliographies. The first issue, which is devoted to women and literacy, includes articles on literacy and abused women, women and literacy research, literacy needs of domestic workers, and women and mathematics. Included among the topics discussed in the issue devoted to plain language are the following: development of learner-written materials, clear language in government, advocacy for clear language, plain language and the law, plain language and the literacy community, and white collar illiteracy. Nine family literacy programs throughout Canada and one U.S. program are profiled in the issue on family literacy. The special issue on literacy resource materials includes 11 reviews of resources from the "Literacy Materials Bulletin" of British Columbia (Canada) and 26 reviews by Saskatchewan (Canada) practitioners. (MN)

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ED 362 661

LITERACY WORKS VOLUME 3

FALL 1991 - SUMMER 1992

SASKATCHEWAN LITERACY NETWORK

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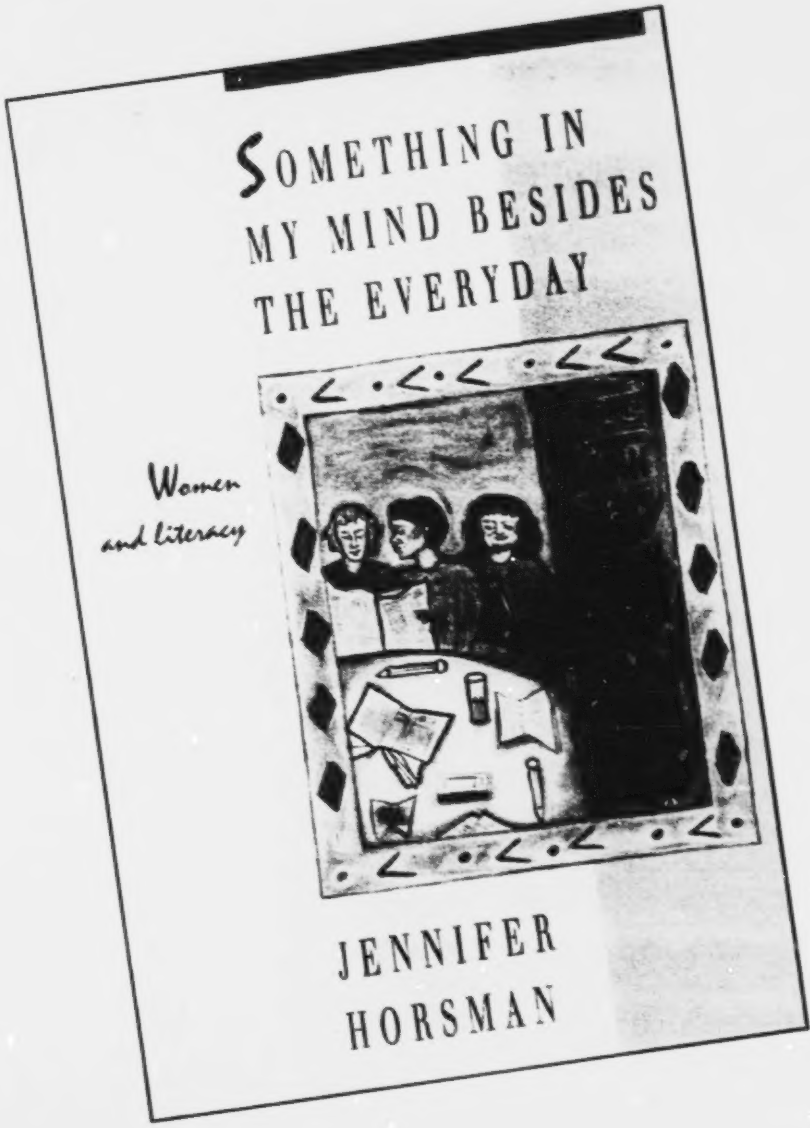
LITERACY W•O•R•K•S

Vol. 3, No. 1 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network Fall 1991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Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. LITERACY WORKS is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. Articles and letters may be sent to the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

For further information, call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236. Fax: c/o Hilary Craig (306) 787-9560

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Between Women and Literacy

By Lorri Neilsen

A woman in Halifax wants to attend a literacy program but she has no time and no money. She has three children to feed and clothe, household chores to keep up with, and a husband who is rarely home. Besides, her husband and her mother don't think she should be going to school, anyway.

A woman in Africa wants to learn to read and write, but she must carry water several miles every day, and look after the children, the animals and the small crop near their home. She rises earlier than her husband and children, and goes to bed later, as women do. She is frequently pregnant, because death comes easily to infants in her world. In her culture, if schooling is available, it is the male children who go first.

We know that the majority of the world's population of illiterate and poor women are of colour. We know, too, that in North America, the largest group of people living below the povery line are women (single mothers, in particular). In our culture, just as in cultures around the globe, poverty and illiteracy go hand in hand. And the hands that have carried the burden are women's hands.

What comes between women and literacy? Why is a woman's right to read her world denied, or placed second to men's? What are the cultural mores that convince a woman, her family, and her friends that learning is a gift she must always forego for the sake of others? Why are women — as literacy volunteers, clerical workers and secretaries, and elementary school teachers — primarily responsible for literacy activities in our culture; and yet, as workers and decision-makers, women have the least access to decision-making and often the lowest wages?

Many of us, as teachers, literacy volunteers, and researchers are seeking answers to these questions. But the questions themselves are tangled, mixed with the flesh, blood, and tears of the lives of women we know or can imagine. What comes between women and literacy, it seems, is not simply opportunity. Literacy programs are available. Nor is it ability, as some women (and many men) believe. We've long since stopped debating that foolish question.

No, it's much more complex than that. What comes between women and literacy are attitudes about the world that value the fist over the helping hand, money over the nourishment of the mind, and winning over the creating of peaceful co-existence. In real terms, it means that countries around the world now spend over $20,000 a year on a soldier, but less than three hundred to educate a child. (Think of the financial cost of the Allies' need to win in the recent Gulf War.) It means that, according to some estimates, three out of ten women in Canada is battered or psychologically abused by her partner. It means that women in Canada make 67 cents for every dollar men make and, worldwide, they make ten cents. It means that, in literacy as in life, when a person is valued less because of gender (or race or other human difference), something about our world is still terribly wrong.

It's easy to lose hope. Especially when we know that, for the cost of a seven-cent treatment administered by a mother who could read the medicine label, the life of a dehydrated child could be saved. Or, for the sake of a few hours a week and a husband who supports her efforts, a woman could earn her high school diploma, or upgrade her skills to find a job.

But, fortunately, the values that have been preventing more women from becoming literate are being increasingly challenged everywhere we look. From the Berlin Wall, to Soviet restructuring, to voices raised in support for pay equity and women's right to be free of violence, the spirit of a new world is emerging. Politicians and power-brokers are at least talking about co-operation, if not practising it. Alliances we couldn't imagine a decade ago are pulling us out of our traditional ways of thinking. Global awareness of the health of our planet is causing us all, from Moscow to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, to think about how we can work together to preserve the world for our children. Young girls are beginning to have dreams as big as their brothers have.

We can find hope in every word that women learn to read and write. We can find hope in their efforts to find a freer world for their daughters. Between women and literacy may be the pain and struggle of an unjust world. But between you and me, if anyone can change the world for the better, it will be literate women.

***Lorri (Boggs) Neilsen** grew up in Saskatoon. She now lives in Hubbards, Nova Scotia where she researches and writes about women and literacy. Her book,* Literacy and Living, *is a study of literacy in the daily lives of adults. Dr. Neilsen works with teachers at Mount Saint Vincent University and does presentations and workshops on women and literacy across North America.*

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Nova Scotia, B0J 1T0.
Telephone: (902) 857-3278

A Survivor Speaks Out

By Valerie Clowater

For most children, childhood is happy and carefree. Bedtimes are a time of closeness as Mommy or Daddy tucks them in and kisses them goodnight. Mornings are full of hustle and bustle, giggles and smiles. For me this was not so.

I am an adult child of sexual abuse. My earliest recollection of my father touching me was at about nine years of age. I remember him sneaking into my room when everyone else was asleep and my mother was at work. At the age of fourteen, I became pregnant with his child. I was snuck into the hospital for an abortion when I was about three-and-a-half to four months pregnant. When I returned home my father left me alone. Alone at 14 to deal with the physical and emotional pain. I had no one to turn to and no one I could trust so I kept our little secret to myself until I was 28 years old.

I was married, at 23, to an alcoholic. By 26 I had two children and no life of my own. At 28, I left my husband, moved to Regina and began my road to freedom of body and mind. A year later my life changed.

My daughter was six and in grade one. I was 29 and couldn't read. When my six-year-old began correcting me on a simple child's bedtime story I became frustrated and nervous. I thought my children would think I was stupid and people would laugh. I couldn't have been more wrong. When I first got the nerve to tell someone I couldn't read I was shocked at her response. She told me I was too smart not to be able to read. Not too long after that I was hooked up with my first of two tutors. Within eight months I went from a grade two to a grade eight level in reading. My confidence and self-worth sky rocketed. At 31, I went back to school (Adult Basic Education) and finished my 10, 11, and 12 in two years. At 33, I took a course in Life Skills Coaching. Now I am almost 35, have three children, a job as a Supportive Independent Living Worker and run an Open Custody Home for teenagers.

I never linked my sexual abuse to my low literacy skills until I was dealing with my abuse. It was then that I realized I didn't remember much about Elementary or Junior High School. What I do remember is that I would spend most of my days daydreaming about a normal life and planning my escape.

When I look back, I can't believe how much I have learned in five years. I know I still have a long way to go and I am okay. I no longer feel guilty and worthless because my Dad hurt me and I no longer think I am stupid and useless because I couldn't read. There are people who can help if you are feeling the way I did. All you have to do is ask.

***Valerie Clowater**, formerly a student with the Literacy Program at Parkland Regional College, is now involved in the program as a volunteer tutor. She was a member of the Saskatchewan Literacy Council and currently works as a life skills coach.*

Women with Special Needs

Literacy and Abused Women

By Conrad E. Pura

Prairie West Regional College (PWRC) is a post-secondary training institution providing the adults of West Central Saskatchewan with educational opportunities and career counselling to enhance their employment potential.

In 1988, with funding from the National Literacy Secretariat of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada and with the assistance of the Saskatchewan Literacy Council, PWRC undertook a research project designed to investigate the relationship between literacy and abused women in rural Saskatchewan.

Considerable evidence existed which documented the need for literacy programs and services in rural Saskatchewan. Another social phenomenon, wife abuse or the abuse of women by their spouse or male-friend, is also an acknowledged problem in rural Saskatchewan. Is there a relationship between these two phenomena?

If a woman needs literacy services and she also is in a primary relationship which is abusive, in what way does this situation change her willingness or her ability to access literacy programs and services?

Twenty-two women who were/are victims of abuse were interviewed as part of a case study approach to understanding these two phenomena. The interviewees consistently reported a lack of confidence in themselves, problems with self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness.

The findings were as follows:

1. There is a positive correlation between literacy needs and abuse in women.
2. There is no identified cause and effect relationship between these two phenomena.
3. Abused women value education and training as the major means to economic independence.
4. Abused women have a multitude of barriers with accessing education.
5. There is a shortage of services to assist abused women especially in rural areas.

The study recommended that the Regional College develop and facilitate programs which will educate the community about the phenomenon of wife abuse. It was also recommended that the programs developed specifically to meet the literacy needs of abused women be especially flexible and include curriculum elements of life skills, independent living skills, assertiveness training and job search skills as well as academic remedial instruction.

The research work which formed the initial steps for this project was conducted by ***Barbara Park****. She engaged in an extensive literature search, the agency consultation and the development of the questionnaire and subsequent target clientele interviews. Also involved in the project at various stages were* ***Susan Hope*** *and* ***Laurie Sim****. For additional information please contact* ***Conrad Pura****,*
Marketing and Program Development,
Box 700, Biggar, Saskatchewan, S0K 0M0.
Telephone: (306) 948-3363.

In Plain English Please

Seniors Review Health Materials

By Elsie Petch

People who read often have more information about their health and can make better informed choices. This is one of the reasons good health is closely linked with education.

South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC) in Toronto is located in an area where literacy is a concern. With the assistance of the Seniors Independence Program funding, over 30 seniors recently became involved in a project to rate and review health information materials.

A total of 42 different pamphlets, 15 films and 12 videos were reviewed by the seniors over a six month period of time. Many of the written materials were considered not satisfactory by the seniors for a variety of reasons. The language used in many of the pamphlets was not clear or easy to read. Use of medical terms often made understanding even more difficult. Also, changes in vision associated with aging made reading pamphlets even more challenging. Colour, glare, and style and size of print were barriers to obtaining information.

One of the more significant findings was a pamphlet for seniors on how to apply for an income supplement. This pamphlet required a grade 13 reading skill level. Case managers working in our community found many isolated seniors had not applied for the income supplement they were entitled to. These seniors did not read well and/or had difficulties with vision. As a result, these seniors were not receiving the additional supplement money needed for food and other basics — basics which directly affected their health and well being.

A range of films and videos were viewed by groups of 10 to 15 people. Any professional who "spoke down" to the audience got "thumbs down." Clear messages received the most positive comments. Films, in which older people spoke about taking control, were received well.

As the project neared completion, one of the SRCHC chiropodists, who was developing a pamphlet on foot care, asked for input from group members. The core group of 15 women had become very good at suggesting how to improve health messages by using "Plain English." News about the project brought in outside requests for pre-testing.

South Riverdale
Community Health Centre

Now the group, which continues to meet, includes pre-testing as one of its activities. To date, group members have provided input for a home support poster, a booklet on seniors' home safety checks, a book on common sense nutrition for seniors, and other material for outside agencies. Group members are also currently involved in improving materials for SRCHC programs.

Hopefully, with dissemination of this and similar information, producers of health and related materials will become more informed and arrange for pre-testing of written and visual materials with a wide range of consumers.

Community based literacy and/or health groups are well positioned to issue challenges and to provide the opportunity for partnerships in the development of readable, relevant, and useful health and related information.

Improved accessibility to health information enables more people to take control over and to make better informed choices about their health and well being.

***Elsie Petch** is a Community Health Promoter working in South Riverdale Community Health Centre, 126 Pave Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M4M 2V8. Telephone: (416) 461-2493.*

Feminist Literacy Workers Network

Some women who met at the Literacy 2000 Conference in British Columbia have started to talk about how women who work as feminists in the field of literacy can keep in touch with each other.

The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) and some of its members have started a network among feminists who are working in literacy as instructors, community activists, students, administrators, researchers, tutors, academics, etc. The network is for women who say that they are feminist and are working in literacy or upgrading.

The steering committee includes Evelyn Battell (British Columbia), Frances Ennis (Newfoundland), Lynn Fogwill (North West Territories), Marie-Francine Joron (Quebec), Michele Kuhlman (Ontario), Jenny Horsman (Ontario), Betty-Ann Lloyd (Nova Scotia), Kate Nonesuch (British Columbia). So far, we are talking about possible regional or national meetings, newsletters, etc.

If you want to discover more about this network, please contact Ailsa Thomson, CCLOW, 47 Main Street, Toronto, Ontario M43 2V6. Telephone: (416) 699-1909.

Women and Literacy Research: Moving into the Second Phase

By Betty-Ann Lloyd

Last year, I talked with women in four Canadian communities about their experience in literacy programs. As a contract researcher with the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW), I was asked to explore how issues of gender affect women's access to and experience of literacy programs. How do the power dynamics of male/female relationships affect women as literacy students and women as literacy workers? Based on this exploration, I was to develop research questions and a methodology for a long-term national action research project that would be carried out in partnership with a variety of programs. Both a final report about the first phase and a funding proposal for the second phase would serve as documentation of the work.

CCLOW has published the first phase report **"Discovering the strength of our voices"** and we have received partial funding for the two-year second phase research. Outreach to programs interested in participating in this second phase will be completed by the end of September and we have planned the first national workshop for women from these programs for November. It is all very exciting. It is also somewhat daunting.

We are asking women to commit themselves to developing, implementing and documenting a woman-positive activity within their programs' students during the entire process. As women said during the first phase, this level of clarity about being woman-positive involves a certain amount of risk.

One of the objectives of the second phase research, therefore, is to provide women with some support, some sense of community, as they reflect on how "woman-positive" programming might be both similar to and different from "community-based" and "learner-centred" programming.

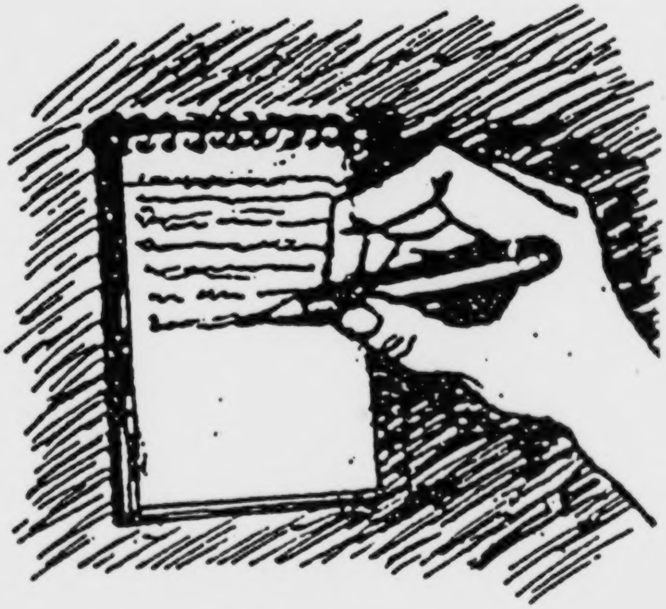
During the second phase of this research, women students and women workers will be able to define "woman-positive" within the context of their programs and communities. We expect that Inuit women, women who are incarcerated, women who live in public housing, women who live and work on the streets and women who are learning English as a second language will define "woman-positive" out of their own experience.

For some programs, the activity may be a woman-only class, a healing circle, writing group or weekly discussion group. It could be the development of a sexual harassment policy, of a women's weekend, of a community forum during International Women's Week. Some programs may want to collect or develop woman-positive curriculum materials. Others may want to make a video about the experiences of women involved in their program or to make a poster that can be used as part of the program's outreach to women. A group of women may decide to look at specific issues such as violence against women, women and welfare or women and health.

We will also have freedom of choice in terms of how we will document the ways in which activities are planned and implemented. What we are asking is that the programs commit themselves to sharing both the positive and negative experiences of the process so that others involved in this second phase may learn from that experience. We also want to provide some public form of documentation of what happens. What we want, in the end, is a better understanding of how women can work toward making programs more woman-positive.

The National Literacy Secretariat is funding this CCLOW project. That means, of course, that the activity itself must become part of the ongoing work of the programs. We cannot contribute to the costs of developing and implementing it. We can, however, contribute to the training and research component. We will pay expenses and per diems for two contact women from each program to participate in three national training workshops. We are also paying for one half-day a week of reflection and documentation of the activity. Two teleconferences with other contact women throughout the process will help deal with questions as they arise and there will also be arrangements made for follow-up once the project is completed.

Anyone who is interested in this research is welcome to write CCLOW for further information. CCLOW is also providing administrative support for a Feminist Literacy Workers Network for women who identify as feminists and who work in literacy as instructors, community activists, students, administrators, researchers, tutors, academics and advocates. For further information, please write: Aisla Thomson, CCLOW, 47 Main Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4E 2V6, or call (416) 699-1909.

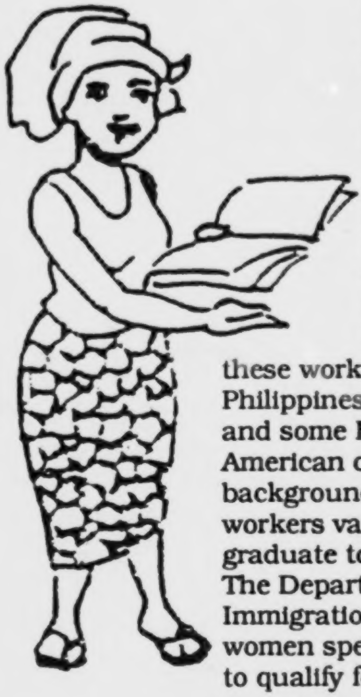


As well as co-ordinating this research with CCLOW, ***Betty-Ann Lloyd*** *is a Ph.D. student at Dalhousie University in Halifax. She is looking at federal employability enhancement policies from the perspective of women who work in social assistance recipient programs for single mothers. She is particularly interested in feminist, critical and traditional concepts of citizenship and justice. Betty-Ann completed her M.A. at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, working in the areas of clear language and design, the social organization of literacy and the impact of the community college system on literacy in Nova Scotia.*

Note: *This article is a short version of an article appearing in the winter issue of* Literacy/Alphabetization, *the journal of the Movement for Canadian Literacy (800 Wellington Street, Suite 500, Ottawa, Ontario, KIR 6K7, phone (613) 563-2464). The longer article explores the question "What about the men?" and discusses how programs that identify as "learner-centred" and "community-based" may not be "woman-positive."*

Nannies/Domestic Workers Have Specific Literacy Needs

By Luisa Graybiel



During the past ten years there has been a significant increase in the number of nannies and domestic workers coming to Saskatchewan. Most of these workers come from the Philippines, the Caribbean islands and some European and South American countries. The educational background of nannies and domestic workers varies from high school graduate to university degree holder. The Department of Employment and Immigration requires that these women speak, write and read English to qualify for a working contract.

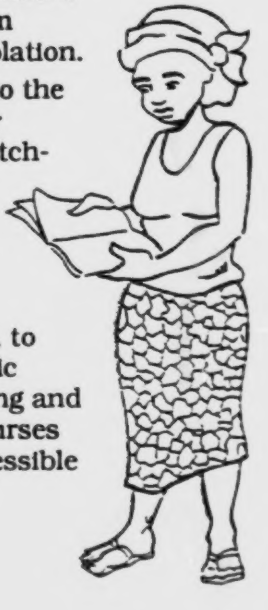
Although foreign domestic workers do have basic literacy skills in English, most of them need literacy training that would increase their ability to function in specific environments, either in their present employment or other types of employment they may wish to pursue once they become eligible for permanent resident status.

Many of these workers need training classes in the spoken language, and practical programs that would increase their ability to communicate and work effectively with children. They need upgrading classes in grammar, pronunciation and conversation techniques. Because of the nature of their jobs, domestic workers are isolated and restricted for most of the week. Their working environment limits them from having contact with other people outside their home. Yet, we expect these women to integrate into Canadian life, to participate in society, and to function intelligently and responsibly in a Canadian setting.

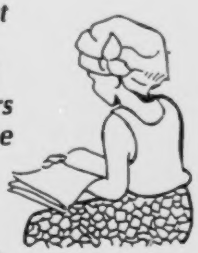
Domestic workers and nannies need the opportunity to enhance their abilities to integrate into society. They need opportunities to prepare themselves for other types of jobs and to apply some of the skills they have acquired in their home countries.

With technological advances and increasing amounts of information, nannies and domestic workers must be equipped to cope with change. They need orientation programs to make them aware of the services and activities available to them in their own communities. They need to develop skills in finding information and seeking assistance from government and non-government agencies to help them break out of their isolation.

Programs similar to the Bridging Program for Women at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) should be made accessible, with minimal restrictions, to nannies and domestic workers. More evening and weekend English courses should be made accessible to these learners.



With the assistance of the Employment and Immigration Department, Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan (IWS) will be offering orientation programs to nannies and domestic workers starting this Fall. These programs will run for five months. Topics such as rights and responsibilities as Canadian workers will be discussed. The programs will also include areas such as health, educational upgrading opportunities, job search skills, social and cultural programs in the community, etc. We hope that these types of programs will help these women develop independence, and become more actively involved in our community.



__Luisa Graybiel__ is president of Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, Provincial Board. She holds a Masters in Library Science from the University of Western Ontario, 1981. Luisa worked with the Regina Public Library as an Adult Program Coordinator in 1986-88 and was involved in an ESL Tutor Training Program.

Immigrant Women Centre, 2248 Lorne Street, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 2M7. Telephone: (306) 359-6514.

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Women and Mathematics: Getting Past the Fear

By Margaret Kaye

What do the following statements have in common?

"Boys are better in math than girls."

"Math has nothing to do with anything I'm interested in."

"Math classes are too scary."

Yes, you're right. They're all about math. BUT, they also all express a female point of view about mathematics more than a male point of view.

In fact, these statements reflect some of the specific beliefs girls have that result in their choosing to drop their math studies. Lets have a look at these beliefs.

"Boys are better in math than girls."

Of course, this is nonsense! Play habits of little boys (racing cars up and around through the air) may contribute to boys having a more developed sense of spatial relations, a valuable skill for the understanding of certain mathematics concepts (geometry). However, it is not something boys (as opposed to girls) are born with. It is a learned skill and has nothing to do with innate intellectual ability. The fact is that research on intellectual ability of males and females indicates no difference.

"Math has nothing to do with anything I'm interested in."

Mathematics is found everywhere in the world around us. It is seen in the geometry of a spiders web, the algebra of the wave motion on a lake, the proportions of the ingredients of a gourmet recipe, as well as day to day living activities. When you consider that males have dominated the entire history of mathematical thought, mathematical texts, curricula and teaching methods, it is not surprising that mathematics has been taught with connections to cars, sports, outer space, etc., topics which have more appeal to males and in which male teachers feel more comfortable and competent. However, it is now time for the mathematics "circle" to be completed. Students need the opportunity to see and use mathematics in music, architecture, cooking, sewing, dance, nature and interior design. Female students would then have a much better chance of finding something of interest to them in their math classes. In fact, all students would benefit from this broader and more realistic application of mathematics. Then, no one would say "Math has nothing to do with anything I'm interested in."

"Math classes are too scary."

Everyone's afraid of the unknown. And there's lots of unknowns in math! The fundamental unknowns in a math class are:

- Is my answer right or wrong?
- Did I do the questions the right way?

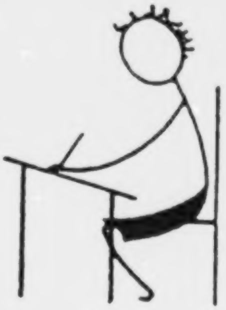
Add to these unknowns the possibility of:

- being asked for your answer;
- being asked how you did the question.

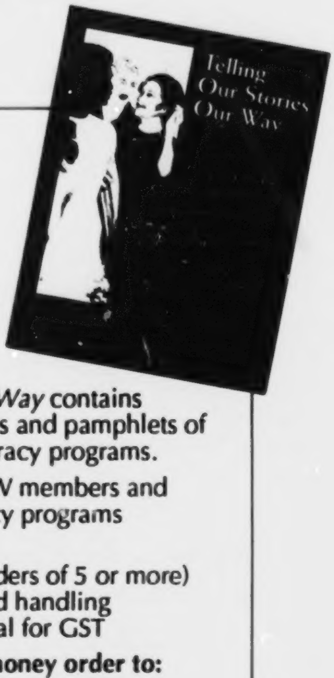
The result of the combination of the above ingredients is FEAR. Many students worry that their "wrong" answer may be exposed to their classmates, or that their different approach to a problem might be ridiculed by the teacher or students. More often than not these students are girls. They have already been influenced by patterns in our society telling them math is for boys and, further, have "discovered" that math is a subject more in tune with the interests of boys. The stage is set for math anxiety, the fear of being exposed in the classroom. The resulting inability to focus on what is happening in the classroom means students miss important explanations and other students' answers. They soon fall behind in their skills and believe they cannot do math. They develop a dislike for the subject. It is a vicious circle.

Teachers could make a significant difference here by showing sensitivity towards their students and imagination in their teaching techniques. Less emphasis on a right answer and greater emphasis on the process of problem solving would alleviate some of the pressure that students feel.

In conclusion, mathematics is an essential component of a well-rounded education. It is a necessary skill for daily living. In today's world, high school math is a must in order to have access to good employment opportunities, and it is a requirement for many post-secondary training options. Women have a right to these opportunities. Exclusion from mathematics based on false beliefs about intellectual ability, limited teaching methods, or a lack of versatility and caring in the classroom is unacceptable. Let us insist that our girls not eliminate mathematics from their studies. At the same time, we need to encourage educators to examine their beliefs and critique their own teaching styles. All students need to have a well-rounded education that is enjoyable and meaningful to them.



***Margaret Kaye** is a former high school math and science teacher. She currently instructs in the Bridging Program for Women, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), Wascana Campus, Regina, where she uses a "connected" teaching approached in a non-authoritarian environment.*



Telling Our Stories Our Way

Telling Our Stories Our Way

A Guide to Good Canadian Materials for Women Learning to Read

Telling Our Stories Our Way contains reviews of selected books and pamphlets of interest to women in literacy programs.

$10 per copy for CCLOW members and community-based literacy programs
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(5% discount on bulk orders of 5 or more)
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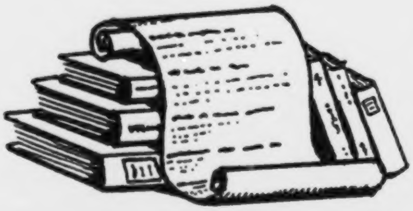


Literacy and Women: A Bibliography

By Ved Arora and Florence Duesterbeck

The annotations given come from various sources. Canadian library symbols are used to specify locations for these titles. These titles may also be found in some uncatalogued special collections. Material included in this bibliography is available through your local library.It may be obtained on inter-library loan.

Bateson, Mary Catherine. **Composing a life.** New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, c1989. ISBN 0871133342. 241 p. $18.95.

This is a study of five artists engaged in the act of creation. The author uses the complex and varied lives of four women, as well as her own life, to explore the work in progress.

Locations: SR, SS, MW, OH, OOC, BNVD, NSHV, OS

Beck, Judy A. **Wider opportunities: combining literacy and employment training for women: a program model.** Washington, D.C.: Wider Opportunities for Women, 1988. 69 p.

Locations: OOSS

Doiron, Rose. **My name is Rose.** Toronto: East End Literacy Press, 1988. ISBN 0920013074. 57 p. $4.50.

Written by an adult learner at the Toronto East End Literacy Project, the book relays a personal account of surviving physical abuse and life on the streets. The book is readability controlled and set in large type.

Locations: OONL, OTNIMR

Hirschoff, Paula. **Wider opportunities: combining literacy and employment training for women: executive summary of the Female Single Parent Literacy Project case studies.** Washington, D.C.: Wider Opportunities for Women, 1988. 31 p. ED 300 553.

Locations: SRED, OOSS, SRU, SSU

Horsman, Jennifer. **Something in my mind besides the everyday: women and literacy.** Toronto: Women's Press, c1990. ISBN 0889611459. 238 p. $14.95.

If we are to understand our students, we need to understand their social context. This work delineates the specific factors that drive and deter women learners. It further explores existing program delivery patterns and the way in which they help and hinder women.

Locations: OOCC, OONL, NBSU, NSHL, NSHVTT

Lloyd, Betty-Ann. **Adult literacy basic education and academic upgrading in Nova Scotia: the role of the community college: a research report.** [S.l.: Literacy Nova Scotia], 1989. 275 p.

Locations: OONL, NSHVTT, NSHL

Lloyd, Betty-Ann. **Discovering the strength of our voices: women and literacy programs.** Toronto: Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women, 1991. ISBN 002183091. 64 p. $11.77.

This is the report of the first phase of a research report. Research was a conducted in four communities across Canada. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this report is not the answers, but the questions that are raised. The report is valuable reading for anyone who wants to understand the needs and aspirations of women learners.

Locations: NSH

Neilsen, Lorri. **Literacy and living: the literate lives of three adults**. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1989. 150 p. $14.95.

Locations: AEU, BVAS, AE, OOCC, SSU

Robertson, Heather-Jane. **Literacy and gender: making the connections: Conference on Literacy and Schools, Chateau Laurier Hotel, Ottawa, May 14–16, 1990**. Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation, 1990. 32 p.

Locations: SRED

Safman, Phyllis C. **Illiterate women: new approaches for new lives.** [U.S.]: P. Safman, 1986. ED 275 856.

"Presentation [at the] National Adult Education Conference, October 23, 1986."

Locations: SRED, SRU, SSU

Telling our stories our way: a guide to good Canadian materials for women learning to read. Prepared by the CCLOW Literacy Materials for Women Project Working Group. Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, c1990. ISBN 0921283083. 101 p. $11.77.

This anthology contains short excerpts and reviews of current Canadian materials. The excerpts are reproduced in original format, with illustrations — a help for the librarian or program co-ordinator. It's a must for anyone in charge of a literacy program.

Locations: OONL, OOC, MW, NSH, BVAU

continued . . .

Literacy and Women: A Bibliography *continued*

Women, literacy and action: a handbook. Coordinated and edited by Mary Breen. Toronto: Ontario Literacy Coalition, 1991. 63 p.

Locations: OH

Women and Literacy. Canadian Woman Studies. Vol. 9, no. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 1988). ISSN 0713-3235. 170 p. $10.

This is a collection of articles which examines literacy as a woman's issue. Themes which recur throughout this collection of writings include: the isolation experienced by women enrolled in literacy programs, supports provided by these programs, the use of volunteers (primarily women) in literacy, and the special needs of women acquiring basic literacy skills.

Locations: SRP, SSU, SRRI, SRDL, SRCB, Parkland Regional College

Writing the circle: native women of Western Canada, an anthology. Compiled and edited by Jeanne Perreault and Sylvia Vance, with a preface by Emma LaRocque. Edmonton: NeWest Pub., 1990. ISBN 0920987886 293 p. $13.95.

This is a collection of Aboriginal writings which demonstrates a wide range of values, attitudes, experiences, and political perspectives. Writing the Circle, a literary work which gives voice to Native women who conventionally were silenced, brings the reader from the traditional past to the more contemporary present.

Locations: OONL, SSU

Ved Arora *is the Head of Bibliographic Services at the Saskatchewan Provincial Library and has been named as the Saskatchewan Library Association representative to the Saskatchewan Literacy Network Board.*

Florence Duesterbeck *is a librarian at the Provincial Library and co-compiled "Literacy materials in Saskatchewan: a bibliography", with Nayda Veeman recently.*

The Saskatchewan Provincial Library

The **Provincial Library** is part of the Saskatchewan public library network. It acts as a coordinating body and a resource centre for the whole system. It provides "back up" library materials and information services not easily obtained elsewhere in the province.

Its address is:
Saskatchewan Library
Community Services
1352 Winnipeg Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7
Fax: (306) 787-8866

Something In My Mind Besides The Every Day

By Jennifer Horsman, Women's Press, Toronto, Ontario, 1990, 238 pages.

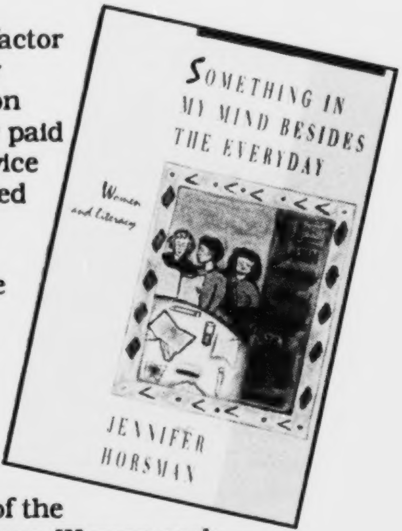
Review by Bonnie Pearson

Jennifer Horsman has been involved in the literacy field, either as a volunteer or a paid worker, since 1973. *Something In My Mind Besides The Every Day* examines the issues of illiteracy in rural Nova Scotia through interviews with 23 women involved in literacy, upgrading, and training programs as well as 10 workers in these programs. While the research was undertaken in 1986, the questions raised and problems identified are current in today's debates.

The failure of the education system to meet the requirements of these women is strongly identified and left them feeling that somehow they had failed. A continuing conjecture, supported by the women's own words, identifies a system which continues to place blame on the women rather than recognize the socioeconomic reality of their lives.

Many of the interviewed women were required by family and/or economic situations to attend school intermittently. The gendered organization of household labour meant that when help was needed at home, the girls were expected to help out. Some were in abusive situations and left school to escape the abuse. The education system labeled these women stupid or dummies. By failing to fulfill its responsiblity, the school contributed to the isolation, and silenced these girls. Further, programs the women participated in were frequently developed for them by a network of professionals who diagnosed their "needs." Yet these literacy programs were rarely set up with women's real needs in mind.

Horsman makes a compelling argument that the ineqality in women's lives is a major contributing factor to their poor literacy skills. Dependence on men, on inadeqately paid work and social service assistance is threaded through the lives of many of these women. The promise of literacy allows them to dream of a different life when they improve their education level.



Literacy and upgrading are part of the dream of independence. Women seek higher educations to enable them to get a job. It is their experience that grade 12 has become the minimum qualification for entry level. Women without grade 12 are often labelled illiterate.

Horsman takes great exception to a rigid definition of literacy. She questions whether literate or illiterate can be defined by any one critera, such as school grade level completed, a basic education test, functionality, or the women's own reports. Most often she speaks of "limited literacy" and, when using the term illiterate, does not add "functionally" "as this term carries with it connotations of incompetence which were not evident in these women's lives." Through their life experiences they may feel well educated, but the lack of education leaves a feeling of vulnerability — the sense of otherness, of being illiterate.

continued . . .

Something In My Mind Besides The Every Day *continued*

"The illiterate is seen as lacking education, and is considered either stupid or as failing to exercise the will to become literate. Thus the illiterate can be blamed for her or his lack of literacy. This focus of responsibility on the individual to improve her or his literacy obscures the structural inequalities which influence who becomes literate and who does not. The academic literature influences and to some degree is influenced by the media, literacy policy and literacy programming. These discourses form the subjectivity of women who are judged or see themselves as having limited literacy skills: The women come to consider themselves stupid or blameworthy."

The dominant theory implies that if you do not have a job, it is because of your inadequate education. This theory ignores the basic fact that in the Maritimes, for both men and women, there are few jobs. The jobs available often pay no more than minimum wage and are often seasonal.

Horsman argues that more of the discussion about literate/ illiterate should be held in the context of sexism, racism, and classism. The discussion, in the absence of political analysis, distorts the demographics level of literacy of Canadians.

The special needs of women with limited literacy skills have been well identified in the work force. Anyone involved in the literacy community would be well served by the time taken to read Horsman's work.

***Bonnie Pearson** is a Senior Staff Representative with the Grain Services Union. She has a special interest in the literacy needs of workers. Co-operation between the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the Grain Services Union has resulted in pilot projects of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's BEST program within the workplace.*

You Can Be Free — An Easy-To-Read Handbook for Abused Women

By Ginny NiCarthy and Sue Davidson, The Seal Press, Seattle Washington, 1989, 113 pages.

Review by Wendy Shaw

With increasing recognition of the prevalence of violence toward women by their partners, it is appropriate that literature would begin to emerge which provides women with important information about what is happening in their relationship. *You Can Be Free*, based on the book *Getting Free*, fills a gap by attempting to help women identify the abuse in their relationship and why it is happening. In a style that is straightforward, informal and personal, the book also addresses leaving an abusive relationship and seeking help.

It is well known that women remain in abusive relationships for any number of reasons. Sometimes, they are afraid of retaliation by their partner if they try to leave. Some women are ashamed they are treated this way. They may be afraid that no one will believe them or perhaps that people will think they are the cause of what is happening to them. A brief discussion about societal expectations for the roles of men and women clarifies that attitudes and beliefs have an impact on abuse. The book touches on the prevalent myth that it is anger that is the problem and focuses on the struggle many women face of whether to leave the man they have loved and separate the children from their father.

Emergency shelters, counselling and support groups for women, treatment programs for men and self-help groups have abounded in the last decade. The authors also support the concept of women helping themselves by directing their thoughts toward their own needs and rights. However, they encourage women reaching out in crisis and finding necessary support. This book is an important resource because it provides practical suggestions for women to help them get the help they need from professionals in their community. It cautions women to be aware of the potential for helping professionals, law enforcement and justice officials to have sexist attitudes that may influence what they say to or do for them.

Two important, but seldom mentioned, areas are also addressed in this book. These are teen abuse, perhaps better known as dating violence, and lesbian abuse.

The book is organized into a table of contents and 19 short chapters, short notes on the authors and a suggested list of other titles of interest. In 113 short pages, the book successfully manages to present a wide range of issues.

Notwithstanding the book's many strengths, the result of including such a wide range of issues results is an obvious compromise in depth of content.

As well, the book was written for an American audience. Consequently, many terms and descriptions of procedures are not applicable in Canada (e.g. order of protection, no contract order, and national help lines). Another deficit is the unfortunate absence of citations of recent literature or a reference listing to facilitate expanding any of the issues only touched on by the book. Nevertheless, the book is a useful resource addition. It is directed at women and will be of particular interest to women currently in abusive or violent relationships.

***Wendy Shaw**, MSW, is the Program Manager of the Abuse Intervention Unit at the Regina Mental Health Clinic. She has worked with both victims and perpetrators of violence and abuse.*

Write On!

Women Learners Speak Up

The ***Bridging Program for Women*** *is a pre-employment program for women who wish to return to the workforce. Most of the learners are women who have chosen to spend time as full time homemakers.*

After completing the eight-week Career Planning component, learners are able to enter other program components which are in keeping with their career goals. Students receive a training allowance and assistance with child-care expenses from Canada Employment.

The Bridging Program was originally started as a pilot project initiated by the ***Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women.***

The three women whose stories we read below were all students in the Bridging Program. One of the instructors at Bridging approached them about contributing to this newsletter. They agreed to share their stories.

All the decisions about content were made by the students, who met over the summer. The only role the instructors played was to provide some technical editing.

Introduction *by Brenda Storry*

In the month of July 1991, some women participated in a taped discussion for a radio documentary on women and literacy. Most of us had similar stories about childhood and life, resulting in our literacy problems. We decided not to focus on the past, but on the present, and how more education is helping to change us. The Bridging Program for Women has helped many women to turn their lives around. Here are just three of us.

Brenda Storry's Story

Without an education and especially reading skills, life can tend to pass you by. Returning to school has given me more self esteem and the needed companionship of others with the same general goal of upgrading and bettering themselves. Until I decided to go back to school, I was unsure of my ability to learn. I soon found out that it was not as difficult as I imagined.

I think every woman should have the chance to go through the Bridging Program for Women, even if for no other reason than learning to be a supportive person and for gaining confidence in herself. The program I entered has helped me to gain the courage to learn to trust people. Although new support was very important, I believe that without my family's support things would have been more difficult.

With the help of great instructors in the program I chose the field of TV broadcasting. To gain experience in that field I had a work placement at Regina's community channel, Cable 7. They gave me a production assistant's job. I learned many useful skills, from being a cameraperson to TV computer graphics and interviewing techniques, lighting, audio and much, much more. I have now written and passed my General Educational Development (GED) (much to my surprise) and I'm going into the Learning Centre to upgrade my English and writing skills.

I feel that I have grown considerably since my return to school and I know now

I have a fighting chance in life. You have to make your own luck and now, with a better and continuing education I feel I have an added edge I never had before.

Vivian's Story

When my three girls were all in school I decided to do something with my life. My husband and I were going to a marriage counsellor and she suggested I start out by going to **The Bridging Program for Women.** My husband didn't really agree, but because our marriage was not going anywhere, he decided to give in.

I went to the Career Planning class at the Bridging Program for eight weeks. In these eight weeks I did job research and found several careers I was interested in. With the factors all weighed, I decided to be a Medical Secretary. I had a three-month work placement at the Bridging Program office. I then wrote an entrance exam to get into Secretarial Studies. I failed it, so I entered the Learning Centre with the Bridging Program. I then wrote my GED and passed everything but my math. I plan to rewrite it. I am now in the Office Education program and am taking typing and have some basic training in Word Perfect 5.0.

The support I received was not from family, but from the instructors and counsellors. They were very encouraging and helpful. No matter what I was going through, they supported me. They helped me with my learning, my separation and my mother's death. They were always there for me.

I feel that a program for women only is a very good idea because there are a lot of women out there who think they are not equal to men, and feel that they could not share things in front of men. But I feel that the only way to overcome some of these fears is to have some experiences in a mixed group.

The things that have helped me the most being in an all-women's group are: not feeling like I'm alone, similar interests and children to deal with. I feel that since I have come into the Bridging Program I have dealt with a lot of things, have learned through my mistakes and I have come out a WINNER.

Tony Spencer's Story

I found out about the Bridging Program through Canada Employment Centre (CEC). I had quit my job because I was in a position that I was unable to handle due to lack of education. I was with the same company for 6 years and took paperwork home every night because I could not read it. (I would get my husband to read it for me.) I had a breakdown from the pressure and other reasons. But the job was the main thing that helped to cause my breakdown.

When I started to recover, a worker from CEC guided me into the Bridging Program for Women. First I went through a course which is no longer offered. It was a self-esteem course, and believe me, I could not have handled anything but that at the time.

From there I went into the Learning Centre, and that's where I felt some hope come back into my life. I finally believed I would learn so I could handle a job in a better manner and not allow myself to get so stressed out.

The Learning Centre (another component of the Bridging Program) was a whole new world for me and I felt many different feelings while I was there. Sometimes memories of my past would come to me — the years I spent in school (only five), my life in a very dysfunctional family. Believe me, it was not great! Then it seemed to me everyone else was moving on and I didn't seem to be getting anywhere. What's wrong with me? Why can't I learn? My one-year time limit for getting my GED was up. I wrote and

continued . . .

failed, but somehow it didn't surprise me. Then they had me tested for learning disabilities. The results came back saying I could learn more from listening than from reading. I was so happy to find out that I was still teachable, for I believe that is what life is: a "learning process."

So I went back in September, to continue to work towards my goals. And I will achieve them, for I know there has to be a better life than I had before.

I also went through a career planning course which added another piece to the puzzle.

I could never have gotten to this point in my life if it wasn't for Bridging. The support I got is unbelievable. These people are my family today and I treat them with high respect for they have given me a reason to fight on. The instructors I have dealt with work together as a team to help make my goals and dreams come true. It's like a dream, but it's real and I live it.

I should mention here that Bridging has found special funds for my learning programs, and that is why I can return to school.

My two sons have their own lives and the way I see support from them is that my 18-year old has just graduated, and my 14-year old wants to go to University. Two years ago neither of them was doing very well. But they have seen me fight. All I went through has given them a reason to stay in school.

I'm not sure what I would have gained or if I would have gained anything from a mixed program. The Bridging Program has put me back in touch with women and how to trust. I find we all have problems and we deal with them. I feel that in a mixed program I might not have given myself the chance to get close to others or them to me. I think I would have acted differently with men around without even realizing it. And I'm not sure I would have found "Tony" if men were in the class. I know men could benefit from a class like this, but they would need space to find themselves and I believe women would interefere with their progress.

I am only one person out of thousands of women that have gone back to school, but I'm happy I was asked to share my story with you. It helped me find out the things I like in my life. If this could help just one person it will be worth it to me.

I am just one person who got her life back through the Bridging Program for Women.

Conclusion

by Tony, Vivian and Brenda

In closing, here are just a few things we thought we should mention.

1. We feel regular fitness classes should be mandatory in all adult learning programs.
2. Some kind of counselling system should be set up for people who are done their program, but want help available if they should need it.
3. There should be more group participation and help available because we all learn differently and at our own level and speed.
4. We are all adults and have many responsibilities. School and our commitment to learning are only some of our responsibilities. Extra help from instructors/counsellors should be available and time-lines should be more flexible. The time is not always enough.

The Bridging Program for Women is located at
2505 23rd Avenue, P.O. Box 556, Regina,
Saskatchewan, S4P 3A3.
Telephone: (306) 787-9084.

Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation Announces 1991 Grants

The Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation exists to advance literacy in Saskatchewan by providing funds to organizations involved in literacy work. The foundation provides funds for materials, supplies, equipment, computer hardware and software to support literacy instruction.

The Foundation is governed by a board which is currently composed of five Directors: Richard Bonokoski (Regina), Robin Stonehouse (Saskatoon), Ev McKay (LaRonge), Peter Tarnowsky (North Battleford), Dick Thompson (Saskatoon). The Foundation office is located in Regina.

Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation 1991 Grant Recipients

Northlands College $37,000

One Principles of the Alphabet Literacy System (PALS) 1/2 Lab (mobile), which includes hardware and software.

Cumberland Regional College $1,700

Basic Literacy and Native-oriented learning material for the Kinistin Reserve.

John Howard Society of Saskatchewan $5,000

To enhance the Literacy component within the existing Youth Day Program by purchasing two computers with printers, software and miscellaneous supplies.

Radius Tutoring $915

To purchase a portable, electric typewriter, portable sound system and computer program.

Ranch Ehrlo Society $11,200

To purchase six computer systems and various software programs to enhance Literacy programs for disadvantaged youth.

Cypress Hills Regional College $7,200

To purchase equipment for enhancing the Autoskill Component Reading Program which includes two computers complete with software, printers, headphones and tutor training resources.

Prince Albert Literacy Network $1,320

To purchase books and activity materials for the Family Reading Program.

Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies $10,000

To develop a Literacy Resource Library and learning material by purchasing books, materials and software.

Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) LINK

By Elsie Livingston

Just arrived — hot off the press — is A Policy and Practice Discussion Document from the Movement for Canadian Literacy: ***Organizing Adult Literacy and Basic Education in Canada.*** It begins with this quotation from the Speech from the Throne to open the Parliament of Canada, May 13, 1991.

"My government recognizes that education is a provincial responsibility under the constitution and respects that fact. My government also recognizes that Canadians are concerned about education, and would like to see Canada-wide goals established, with provincial endorsement and cooperation, for the year 2000. These goals could include cutting illiteracy rates in half."

Mary Keane, President of Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL) Canada, hit the nail (pencil) on the head when she addressed the issue of "Advocating for Change" in Saskatoon in May, 1991. Mary clearly laid the responsibility for "professionalising" adult education on the shoulders of the institutions, that is, governments, colleges, organizations and practitioners. "In order to professionalize androgogy (teaching of adults)," stated Mary, "it is imperative that we gain knowledge, foster growth and facilitate change."

To gain knowledge we must remedy deficiencies in our discipline, counter obsolescence, and assure competence. The Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association (SABEA) efforts to improve evaluation and placement in the Adult Basic Education (ABE) system by scrapping the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) is one example of assuming responsibility for the system. Another is the "English as a Second Language Accreditation Review" undertaken by the Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English Speakers (SCENES). I encourage our professional groups to share their knowledge with each other and study MCL's new Discussion Document as well.

Adult educators from all disciplines affirm the uniqueness of adults as learners and understand the need for an appropriate setting in which learning can take place. To provide this we need to pursue opportunities for personal enhancement and professional growth. The "public" system — government, training institutions, SABEA, SCENES, MCL and the Saskatchewan Literacy Network — have all expressed the belief in providing professional growth; there has, however, been a huge gap between the belief and the "bucks!" Each year the professional development funds have decreased or, at least, have not been available to meet the instructional needs of our practitioners. Practising educators have not fully supported their organizations in many cases. And the "private" colleges have, for the most part, neglected professional development. The present situation is debilitating our professionals and eroding the adult literacy and basic education system in our province. This is supported by the conclusion "that there is a need for a comprehensive, coordinated, fully accessible adult learning system . . ." in ***Literacy Learning in Saskatchewan*** (Hindle, 1990).

I believe that our collegial action can facilitate change within the literacy and adult basic education system in Saskatchewan. It is clearly evident that the public must be informed of the objectives and activities of adult education if they are going to be willing to fund program initiatives with their tax dollars. Of course, we are the citizens, but we have a unique responsibility to shape the system by reforming our practice and delivery of programmes and developing our own "mission."

Organizing Adult Literacy and Basic Education in Canada is available to promote discussion, provide a focus for literacy advocacy and, through improving organization and practice, narrow the gap between adult literacy education and all other areas of education. This seems to me what Mary Keane referred to when she challenged us to "professionalize" our profession and could assist in meeting our government's goal of cutting illiteracy rates in half during the Decade of Literacy.

Organizing Adult Literacy and Basic Education in Canada
A policy and practice discussion document

Single copies are available free from:

Elsie Livingston
MCL Provincial Representative
#101 – 699 28th Street West
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
S6V 6K5
Telephone: (306) 763-7745

For multiple copies (available at cost plus shipping) contact:

The Movement for Canadian Literacy
880 Wellington Street
Suite 500
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 6K7
Telephone: (613) 563-2464

NETWORK NEWS — Fall 1991

1. **Student Support**
   - An exciting development this year is the plan to form a provincial learner group. The Network will be helping with:
     - a provincial meeting on September 27th
     - selection of Saskatchewan's representative to the National Learner Action Group
     - planning and organizing a 1992 provincial conference.
   - The Network will continue to provide support and consultation to local student support groups upon request.

2. **Activities for Practitioners**
   - The Network is cooperating with Alberta and Manitoba literacy workers in organizing the first ever Prairie Literacy Institute (July 13–27th, 1992 in Saskatoon). This was originally scheduled for July 1991 but was postponed to ensure an even better event.
   - Are you planning tutor training this year? Remember to contact the Network if you would like assistance.

3. **New Projects for 1991-92**
   - Family Literacy — The Network will be developing a handbook on family literacy and publishing a column in "Query," the Saskatchewan Reading Council newsletter. A pilot project will be running at Mayfair School in Saskatoon which will attempt to bring together adult literacy and the K-12 system. If you would like more information, please call or write the Network office.
   - Community Initiatives — The Network will work with local interest groups to help set literacy goals, objectives and action plans with the goal of greater self-reliance.
   - Interagency Co-operation — The Network will explore ways in which it can work with other provincial agencies to support the cause of literacy and adult education in Saskatchewan.

4. **Publications**
   - Literacy Works — The Network is pleased to announce that it has contracted Liz Ormiston to serve as Editor for the 1991-92 year. Liz has worked on the editorial committee during the past year and has extensive experience in the production of newsletters with other agencies. She works out of her home at 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Sask. S4T 2R3, telephone (306) 757-7236.
   - Bibliography — Saskatchewan Literacy Materials, available for $5 from the Network office.
   - The Network has received $2,500 from the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy for the publication of Volumes I and II of the New Writers series, now entitled Memories and Dreams. Watch for it. New adult writers in Saskatchewan are invited to submit works to the editor: Peggy Buckley, Adult Education Advisory Services (AEAS), 1078 – 2 St. East, Prince Albert, Sask. S6V 0G7. Telephone 922-0551.
   - What's News — we'll publicize upcoming literacy activities if you send us details by the 15th of the month.

***On Our Way* celebrates first anniversary**
Saskatchewan learners have been reading On Our Way, *the plain language newspaper for adult learners, for a year. On June 25 in Prince Albert, anniversary celebrations were held. Above, Peter Dubois (right), Saskatchewan Literacy Network president, presents Alan Kobe, representing Saskatchewan learners, with a certificate of appreciation for learners' support of the newspaper.*

4. **Board News**

- The Network is a registered charitable organization as of August 1! If you appreciate the work of the Network please consider making a donation. Cheques should be made payable to "Saskatchewan Literacy Network" and tax receipts will be issued for all donations of $10 and over.
- The Network is attempting to broaden its contacts in the community by inviting a variety of agencies to name representative directors to the Board of Directors. We welcome the following new directors:

  Literacy Coordinators

  Pat Soiseth — Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association

  Mike Ilanna — Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement & Integration Agencies

  Ruth Epstein — Saskatchewan Council of Educators of Non-English Speakers

  Lori Stinson O'Gorman — Saskatchewan Federation of Labour

  Ved Arora — Saskatchewan Library Association

  Al Brown — Saskatchewan Reading Council

  The Network has been invited to participate in meetings of the Saskatchewan Association for Life Long Learning and the Saskatchewan Reading Council.
- A board/staff retreat was held October 18th and 19th to review the activities of the Network and to plan for 1991-92. Please contact the office or any board member if you have thoughts about what the Network should or should not be doing.

5. **Office News**

- Network offices are rooms B9.10 and B9.14 in the basement of SIAST Kelsey at the corner of Idylwyld and 33rd St. in Saskatoon.

  The office is open 8:30 to 4:30 Monday to Friday but please be patient when you try to phone us! Our phones have "call waiting" and don't ring busy if we're talking to someone when you phone. Also, the photocopier, mailroom and fax machine are all a long way from the office so please leave a message if the machine is on.

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

1. SCIC Project Funds: The Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation will provide up to $5000 (on a 3:1 matching basis) for education projects that increase understanding of international development and promote global co-operation. Contact Laurie in Regina at 757-4669 for more information.
2. Literacy Advisory Committee: On September 6th, Education Minister Ray Meiklejohn announced the formation of a committee to offer direction on literacy.
3. 1991 Literacy Awards of Merit: Congratulations to the following: Greg Daniels, Alan Kobe, Elsie Livingston, John Sokolowksi, Ruth Thomson, Sylvia Vicq, The On Our Way newspaper team, CAMECO.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Literacy Works needs your help.

The editorial committee is looking for new members. This is a working committee which meets in Regina to plan upcoming issues and to review submissions. There are approximately six meetings per year.

Please call Liz in Regina
at **757-7236**
if you would like to be involved.

Future Issues of Literacy Works

The themes for our next two issues are:

PLAIN LANGUAGE (winter)
deadline for copy, December 1

LITERACY AND THE FAMILY (spring)
deadline for copy, February 15

If you have ideas for other future issues, please contact:

Liz Ormiston, Editor
2349 Robinson Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4T 2R3
Telephone: (306) 757-7236

OR

Hilary Craig, Newsletter Committee
124 Champlain Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 4Y9
Telephone: (306) 585-0981 (home)
(306) 787-9155 (work)
Fax: (306) 787-9560

ON OUR WAY

SASKATCHEWAN'S LEARNERS' NEWSPAPER
BOX 3003
PRINCE ALBERT, SASK. S6V 6G1

Subscriptions:	September to June:	$25 for institutions (10 copies per month) $ 5 for individuals (1 copy per month)
	January to June:	$12.50 for institutions $ 2.50 for individuals

For more information call Sharon Skage in Prince Albert at 953-3117

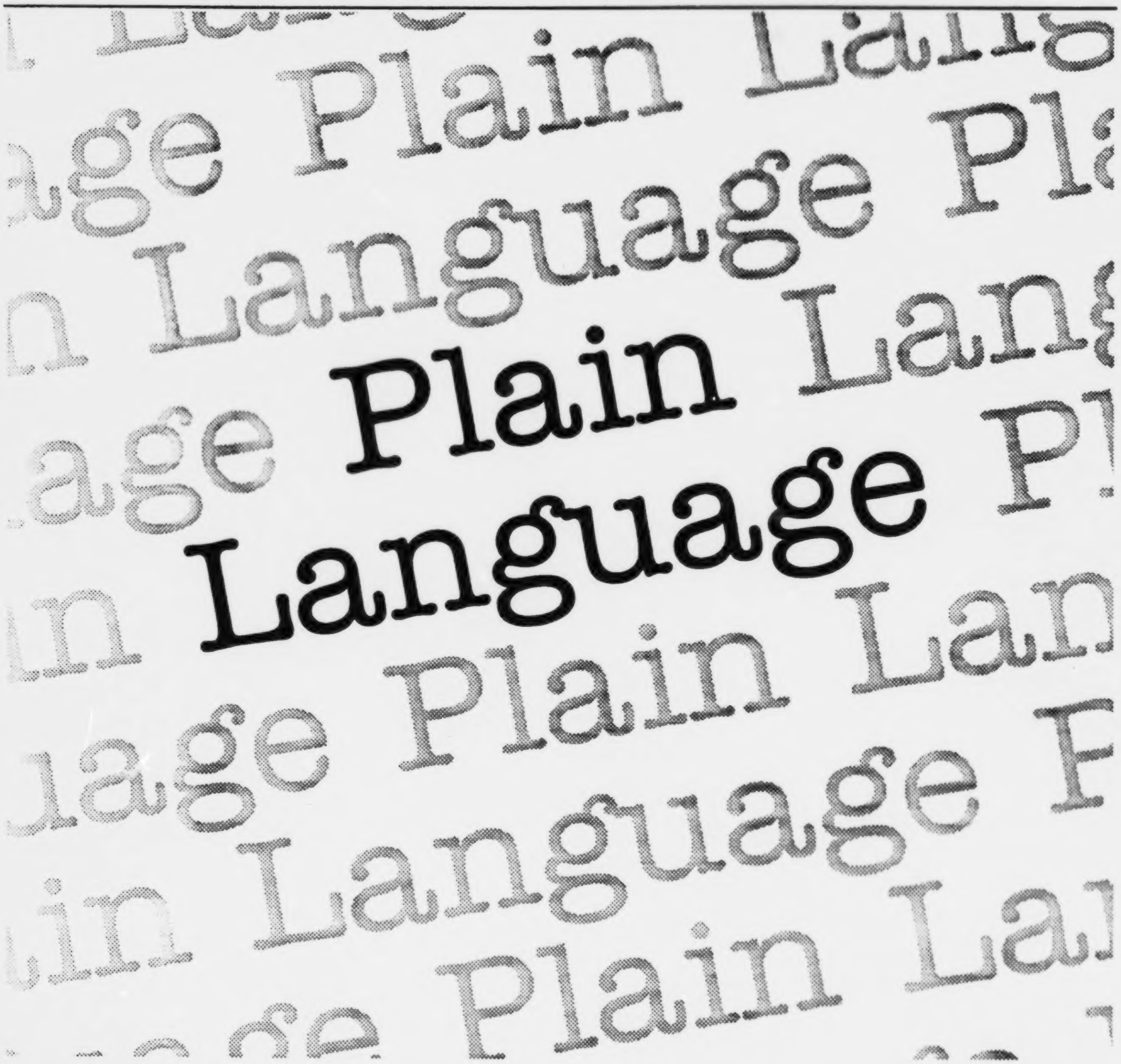
Attention Instructors and Coordinators!
"On Our Way" Needs You!

Two pages are reserved in every issue of the provincial learners' newspaper for classroom projects. For more information, or to sign up for a special feature, please call Sharon Skage in Prince Albert at 953-3117 or Nayda Veeman in Saskatoon at 653-7178.

("On Our Way" also welcomes unsolicited learner-written material. If you know new writers who would like to publish their work in our paper, please tell them about us!)

LITERACY WORKS

Vol. 3, No. 2 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network Winter 1992


Plain Language

Price: $5.00
(includes tax)

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Editorial Committee for this issue: Ved Arora, Hilary Craig, Denise Hildebrand, Elizabeth Slater

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236. Fax: c/o Hilary Craig (306) 787-9560.

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EDITORIAL

Plain language: where is it taking us?

By Sharon Skage

> *They who have grown accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness . . .*
>
> *. . . I proposed . . . to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men . . .*
>
> Preface to **Lyrical Ballads** (1802)
> by William Wordsworth
> and S.T. Coleridge

It is interesting to see, in the views of a 19th century poet, the same concerns and theories as are prevalent in the plain language movement today. Wordsworth rejected what he called "extravagant and absurd language," advocated writing that was simple and direct, and found everyday experiences to be the most effective vehicle for communicating his ideas. It all sounds very much like the approach taken in materials produced for adult education and literacy instruction.

We are increasingly aware, however, that the need for plain language extends beyond the classroom. It is reassuring to see the many recent initiatives, both public and private, to implement plain language policies in written communication. But there is still a lot of work to be done and a lot of questions to be resolved about the use of plain language.

Call it "bureaucratise" of "bafflegab," most of us have been irritated at one time or another by trying to make sense out of verbose, ostentatious written material. But writing need not be in "bureaucratise" to be difficult; unfamiliar vocabulary, complexity of structure, length, and presentation can make reading frustrating, demoralizing and even dangerous to the thousands of Canadians with poor reading skills. Our society is dependent on the written word for information affecting our jobs, our families, our health, and our general well-being. So it is only reasonable to call for the use of plain language to increase, if not ensure, access to this information.

But just what do we mean by "plain language?" And to what range of written material should this apply?

Proponents of plain language will tell you about the need for consistency: forget variation for the sake of style, and refer to something by the same name to avoid confusion. Yet we have, ironically, "plain language," "clear language," "plain English," "graded language," "simplified writing," and "readability-controlled writing." Certainly there are differences between some of these, but there is a need to clarify the terminology and the intent of the plain language movement as it gains momentum.

When "plain language" is used in the educational context, the material can be suited to different levels of reading ability. But when the discussion refers to written material in the public domain, is it enough to say that these materials should be in clear, direct language? Should we consider this a temporary or permanent shift in the way we communicate? What implications does this have for language and education in a historical, development sense? For an issue about simplicity, plain language is really rather complex.

There is a place, of course, for difficult, even esoteric language. It would be folly to say that *all* writing should be at a basic level. The English language provides a magnificent means of expressing our ideas, and we have created a diverse vocabulary to suit our needs. There are many different styles of writing for different purposes, and the appropriate style depends on the reader. When the purpose is to reach as many people as possible, or when it is not safe to assume that the reader is capable of understanding an advanced level of writing, the need for plain language is obvious. We can celebrate the advances made in promoting plain language, but we must carefully consider where we are going.

***Sharon Skage** is the editor of* On Our Way, *Saskatchewan's plain English newspaper. She has been involved in the Pine Grove Literacy Project for two and a half years, first through SIAST Woodland Campus, and currently with the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Sharon holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Regina.*

The address of On Our Way *is:*
Box 3003
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
S6V 6G1

Working together: developing learner-written materials

By Sharon Skage

On Our Way is a plain English newspaper. Until December, 1991, it was published by a group of women in the Pine Grove Correctional Centre outside Prince Albert, and has since moved to the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) Woodland campus in Prince Albert. In both situations, the newspaper project has had three objectives: to provide material that is relevant to the experiences of and accessible to adult learners; to serve as a vehicle for the writings of these learners; and to provide a group of people with the opportunity to grow and benefit from the experience of publishing their own writings.

The process used in producing the plain English newspaper is simple and straightforward. The articles for the newspaper are written by the newspaper team, contributors from programs around the province, and the editor. The newspaper team writes original articles, having done research and interviews to gather information, and they also adapt information (with permission) from a variety of Saskatchewan newspapers. The material sent in by learners is either part of a classroom project or an individual submission.

The learner-written material sent in from other programs is currently unedited except for spelling and punctuation. The writing generated in the newspaper project, however, is worked and reworked until it is at a suitable level; the newspaper is not only a vehicle of expression, but an educational reading resource as well. The paper's readability must meet the needs of its audience, and so the newspaper team learns to simplify written material. These articles are then indexed according to the level of difficulty.

In addition to the value of the information provided in a plain language newspaper such as *On Our Way*, there are many other benefits that result from having a group of learners publish their own material. It gives them an opportunity to improve their own reading and writing skills; they learn important job skills; and they benefit from working together and meeting goals. Many of the people who have been involved in the newspaper project have described the boost in self-esteem that results from seeing the result of their efforts in print. In the words of one person who has worked on *On Our Way*:

"I've a new sense of goodness about myself. I'm happy because of the work I've been doing. It's seeing what I can accomplish and plan that makes me feel this way."

A learner's perspective

By Gail Bellegarde

First, I would like to thank *Literacy Works* for giving me the opportunity to write about my experiences on this project. During my off-and-on employment with *On Our Way*, I have learned valuable information that will surely help me in my future endeavors to become a journalist.

Working here has taught me to work much more on my own. I do things such as correct my own mistakes, simplify reading material for learners and search for information to help me write my own articles. It gives me satisfaction in myself because I am doing something to help learners. I have learned to do so many things.

Most of my articles deal with the Indian land claims as I follow the striving for self-government. Working here has also given me the chance to learn more about the world itself and not only Canada. Reading other things from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network has also helped me to see how some articles are done.

Journalism is something I have been interested in for a long time. Bringing the news to people makes me feel good. But bringing news to learners in plain simple language makes me feel even better. That way I know people are reading my articles.

***Gail Bellegarde** is from the Little Black Bear Indian Reserve not far from Regina. She writes poems and articles concerning Native issues. Her goal is to become a well-known Native journalist. At present, she is the Inmate Chairperson for the Pine Grove Correctional Centre.*

Clear language in government: Saskatchewan leads the way

By the Saskatchewan Family Foundation

Many people are demanding that "plain" or "clear language" be part of their contact with government. This means using simple words with common meanings, short and effective sentences and avoiding the jargon, legal words or bureaucratic language that is often described as "bafflegab."

Saskatchewan is the first province in Canada to start a government-wide Clear Language Program. Every government department and agency is expected to use Clear Language in all written material and in public contacts.

The Clear Language movement grew with the consumer movement in the 1960s and 70s when consumers began to demand that all types of information on the law, governments, courts and business be written in easy-to-understand language.

In the 70s, several American States passed legislation requiring the use of Clear and Plain Language in consumer documents like contracts, residential leases, warranties, product safety notices, insurance policies and government information on regulations and policies.

In 1986, the Canadian Law Information Council adopted the promotion of Plain Language as a priority and opened the Plain Language Centre in 1988. The Centre serves as an information clearinghouse and offers consulting and training services.

The same year, the Federal/Provincial Consumer Education and Plain Language Task Force was established to support the promotion of Plain Language and initiate programs. Saskatchewan has many consumer information and education materials in Clear Language. The program is co-ordinated by the Family Foundation.

The benefits of Clear Language include:

- **Better customer service and relations.** Communicating effectively puts a human face on government and reduces the customer frustrations and misunderstandings.
- **Greater public access to programs.** Everyday language and better print communications let more people know about and use government programs.
- **Major cost reductions in service delivery.** Reducing errors in completing forms and writing clear correspondence mean less time is spent correcting errors or misunderstandings.

Many provincial government departments and agencies have already trained key staff to deliver Clear Language training to everyone in their organization. A Clear Language training manual is now in use across government.

Through a Clear Language network, government people meet regularly to share information, ideas and report on the progress which has been made. One important way of providing Clear Language services is by asking the public to help and involving clients in the process. For example, Saskatchewan Energy and Mines is working with the petroleum industry in Saskatchewan to redesign the forms which must be used.

Most government publications and forms are now being reviewed to ensure that Clear Language is being used.

"Bafflegab" is slowly disappearing! People really are saying "plan" instead of "strategize" and "pay" rather than "remuneration" when they speak to one another and to the public. Planning and organizing written materials in a positive, simple and consistent way that avoids stereotypes is now expected of every public employee in the provincial government.

By working with the public and clients, Saskatchewan government agencies expect to reduce and prevent many problems. "Clear Language" is expected to save thousands of public dollars in the process.

For more information contact:
Saskatchewan Family Foundation
2161 Scarth Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7
Telephone (306) 787-0690; Fax (306) 787-0694

Soaring
Into
Literacy

South Saskatchewan Reading Council

presents the 23rd Annual
Saskatchewan Reading Conference '92:

Soaring Into Literacy

May 7, 8 and 9, 1992
Ramada Renaissance
Regina, Saskatchewan

Main Speakers: Donna Cochrane, Lynn Taylor, Bev Kula, Jo Phoenix

Small Group Sessions: Language and Culture; Across the Curriculum; Support Roles; New Language Arts Curriculum; Evaluation/ Mainstreaming; Family Literacy.

Conference Fees:
Members – $74.90
Non-members – $90.95 (includes membership)
Students – $42.80 (includes membership)
Group rates and individual event rates also available.

Registrations received by April 1 will be eligible for a draw.

For registration information call Dawn at 761-0641.

Send registrations to:
South Saskatchewan Reading Council
c/o Dawn Kesslering
2406 Crowe Bay East
Regina, Saskatchewan S4V 0V7

Where have you been? Clear and simple: a new standard for federal government publications

"You" have been missing from a lot of government documents lately. Have you noticed? How many policies, pamphlets, guidelines and letters have you read that never refer to "you?" Many documents talk about "recipients," "Canadians," or "employees," but they never talk to you, even though they may concern you directly. There is a movement afoot to bring "you" back into the picture.

The federal government is getting serious about communicating clearly. Many departments have recognized that the information they produce is often too difficult to understand, so they are taking action to get their messages across more clearly.

Have you ever?

- picked up a document on a subject that interested you only to put it down again because it looked too complicated or wordy?
- found yourself re-reading sentences and paragraphs in reports, memos and manuals to try to understand them?
- wondered if what you have written is clear but concluded that it must be because everyone writes about the subject that way?

Plain Language Guides

If these situations are familiar, you will be pleased to know that two new publications, *Plain Language; Clear and Simple* and *Pour un style clair et simple*, will help us communicate more clearly. The National Literacy Secretariat of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada has taken a lead role by publishing these guides to help people write clearly and simply. The guides suggest seven steps to clearer writing and cover such subjects as choosing simple words and explaining complicated ones, organizing documents to meet readers' needs, and using a conversational tone in writing. The guides use examples from government and other sources to show even complex ideas can be explained in a straightforward way. They also offer suggestions on using familiar words instead of "new, improved" jargon. All of the advice in the guides puts "you," the reader, first.

The guides were developed by an advisory group representing 14 federal departments. This partnership helped ensure that the guides would be widely distributed throughout government and provided valuable contacts for advice on their content and design. Public servants at all levels contributed to the process by reviewing and commenting on draft versions of the guides.

Making a Commitment to Plain Language

That commitment to plain language is spreading. Departments are preparing companion guides for their managers and employees to explain how the plain language techniques can be applied in their work. They are also planning how they can change their work standards to ensure that plain language writing is a priority, and they are organizing hands-on workshops to introduce workers to the techniques.

The federal government's plain language approach is low-key, involving small steps in many departments. But the emphasis is on action. You can measure the success of all that activity by the clarity of the messages you receive in the future. May the simple statement win.

This article was prepared by ***Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada****, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M5. Copies of* Plain Language: Clear and Simple *and* Pour un style clair et simple *may be bought from the Canada Communication Group-Publishing, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S9. The cost is* ***$10.45*** *($6.95 for the guide and $3.50 for shipping and handling) plus GST.*

Prairie Literacy Institute

July 13-24, 1992
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon

Focus on practice in adult literacy • For teachers, instructors, tutor coordinators, tutors

THREE COURSES:
- Literacy Development I: Jean Reston, N.W.T.
- Literacy Development II: Mary Norton, Alberta
- Learning Differences, Challenges and Difficulties: Robin Millar, Manitoba

REGISTRATION/TUITION:
- Registration limited — Fee $200
- Includes shared accommodation and most meals.
- Some travel bursaries for prairie literacy workers.
- Registration packages will be circulated early in 1992.

CERTIFICATION: Credit available through Manitoba Literacy Office, Advanced Literacy Certificate. Other certification is under discussion.

SPONSORED BY: Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Literacy Workers' Alliance of Manitoba, Literacy Coordinators of Alberta

FUNDED BY: National Literacy Secretariat

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Saskatchewan Literacy Network
P.O. Box 1520
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5
Telephone: (306) 653-7368
Fax: (306) 933-6490

Advocating for clear language

By Tracy Westell

During the years I worked directly with adult learners, I was asked time and time again to explain government forms to people. They were often impossible to understand unless you knew the system. It became clear to my co-workers and I that changing the system was a long-term goal but changing how forms were written and designed could be done right away. It would make an immediate difference to thousands of people and their right to access public information.

Language is powerful. Through language we can give and withhold information; we can control how people are able to understand ideas. If people have access to a broad range of information in a clear style, they will be better able to make informed decisions about their lives; they will have choice and, sometimes, control and, occasionally, power. Clear communication of all sorts will help to decrease conflict and frustration, increase understanding and personal choice and create more effective working and learning situations.

Clear language and design can: demystify legal and medical information; clarify government policies; improve public education about important issues; and enable people to take part more fully in the running of their communities. For all of these reasons, the Ontario Literacy Coalition has made a commitment to advocate for clear language and design with their member groups and with government.

The Coalition is currently organizing workshops for its members on clear language and on advocating for clear language in their communities. Literacy programs and learners can play an important role in encouraging and educating community agencies and local government to use clear language in their publications. Learners are especially important in the assessing and developing of materials that are aimed at people who have low reading and writing skills.

At the provincial or regional level, literacy organizations must push government to create clear language policies. This means having internal and external government documents written and designed clearly. Many countries have already done this, probably the most notable being England. Imagine if documents, bills and reports brought before Parliament were written clearly; imagine if articles written about government policy were easy to understand;

imagine if politicians and bureaucrats shared their understanding in a clear way and therefore shared some of the control and power. Clear language policies in government are not the only answer for our current disappointment with politicians and government, but they can be part of the solution.

The Ontario government is currently in the process of writing a clear language policy and the Ontario Literacy Coalition will be presenting a position paper to it about this issue. The implementation of the policy will affect us, especially if the government sees the importance of consulting with adult learners and literacy workers.

Some of the best advocates for the use of clear language have been learners. Learners in Ontario have fought for clear language versions of: letters from their kid's school; posters for community events; policy statements on housing and social assistance; health information; and the Ontario Literacy Coalition's newsletter. With the help and support of other clear language advocates, they are slowly making a difference.

Ontario
Literacy
Coalition

Tracy Westell *is Public Education Co-ordinator for the Ontario Literacy Coalition, 365 Bloor Street East, Suite #1003, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3L4. Telephone (416) 963-5787; Fax (416) 961-8138.*

Plain language has become a movement

By Helen Lightbown

I bring you glad tidings: documents from governments and law offices are getting better. Perhaps you have noticed it yourself. In the example that appears with this article, you will see how an official bulletin from the Lotteries Branch, Government of Ontario looked before and after its plain language facelift. The "after" is in use today. It was redone in January, 1991.

Whole governments are changing to the plain language style

A year ago, the Government of Saskatchewan officially committed itself to use plain language in all of its communications with the general public. Alberta did so recently. And Ontario is working on a plain language policy as you read this.

There are lawyers who simplify too

Did you know that the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) formally endorsed the use of plain language in legal drafting in 1991? It had a committee of lawyers study the problem and publish a book on the subject. The book is called *The Decline And Fall Of Gobbledygook* and it was first printed in 1990.

Now, there is a CBA task force on legal literacy and the Plain Language Centre is involved in this too. The task force is going to find out what barriers ordinary people experience when they try to pursue their rights under the law.

As to plain language lawyers in private practice, they are dotted across the country at the moment but they, too, are a growing number. Nancy Hopkins at Gauley & Company in Saskatoon is one. Bill Riley at MacKinnon Phillips in Ottawa and Wilf Jenkins of White Jenkins Duncan & Ostner in Waterloo are others.

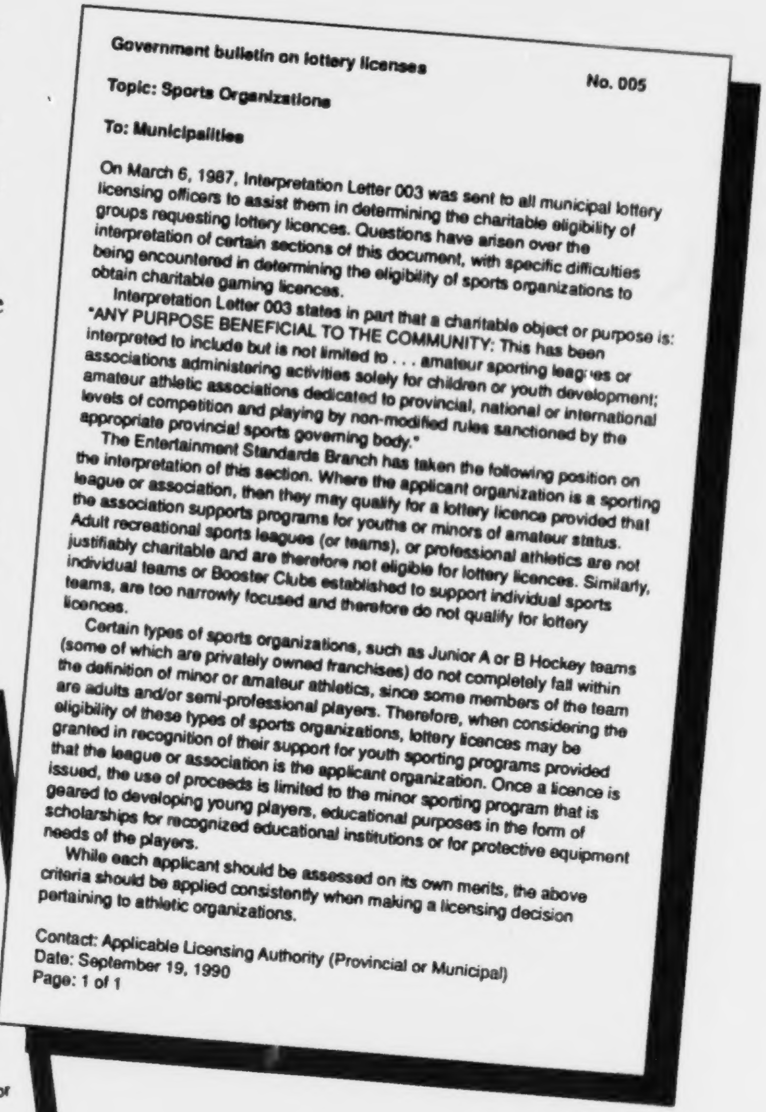
And then there is the pioneer, Robert C. Dick at Rogers Smith Dick & Thomson in Toronto. For more than a quarter of a century, he has been writing simplified legal documents for his clients. Says Mr. Dick: "It can be done. It will be done. So they (other lawyers) either get on the bandwagon or get left behind."

Imagine a world in which your lawyer writes a will you can read and understand. A lease. A mortgage. A contract. Or City Hall publishes a public notice that is plain. A form letter. A parking ticket. Someday, simplified legal and bureaucratic documents will be the standard, not a special order. I admit that these initiatives are taking place inside government and legal circles. We are involved in these internal changes because we act as consultants and lobbyists for plain language. But we could not do it without you. People like you have complained loud and long about flawed forms and ponderous prose, both to us, at the Plain Language Centre, and to the many government departments and law firms that put out these bad documents.

But we are also here for you. We are a public facility like your local library. You can get photocopies of many of our examples. You can subscribe to our newsletter, *Clarity*, for free. You can get revised copies of our bibliographies in English or in French and you can borrow any of the books, articles or video tapes for the cost of shipping them to you.

We consult with people like you across the country, perhaps not as often as we would like because we are constrained to recover our costs. But we do our best to stay in touch because people like you have armed us with many of the horrible examples that get us a laugh or two in our speeches, presentations and training courses. Nothing sells plain language better than real examples sent with real anecdotes by real people. So, as the talk show hosts always say: please keep those cards and letters (and bad documents) coming.

***Helen Lightbown** is Communications Co-ordinator for the Plain Language Centre (PLC) in Toronto. The PLC is an agency of the Canadian Legal Information Centre, a national non-profit organization, 600 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1P3. Telephone (416) 483-3802; Fax (416) 483-4436.*



Government bulletin on lottery licenses **No. 005**

Topic: Sports Organizations

To: Municipalities

On March 6, 1987, Interpretation Letter 003 was sent to all municipal lottery licensing officers to assist them in determining the charitable eligibility of groups requesting lottery licences. Questions have arisen over the interpretation of certain sections of this document, with specific difficulties being encountered in determining the eligibility of sports organizations to obtain charitable gaming licences.

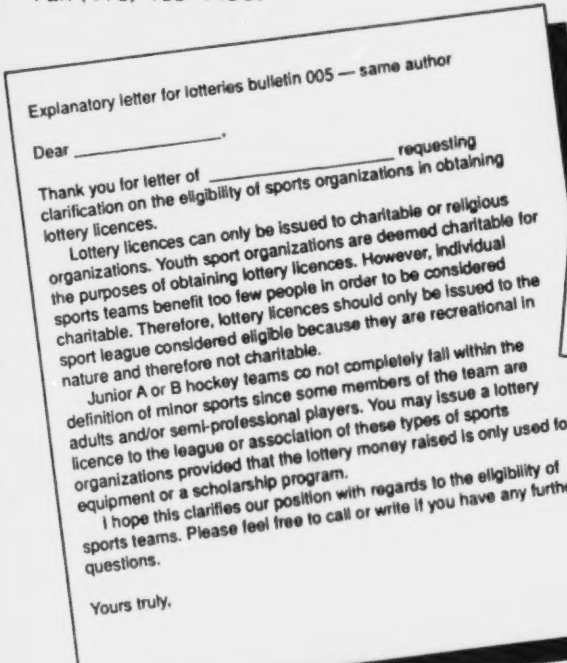
Interpretation Letter 003 states in part that a charitable object or purpose is: "ANY PURPOSE BENEFICIAL TO THE COMMUNITY: This has been interpreted to include but is not limited to . . . amateur sporting leagues or associations administering activities solely for children or youth development; amateur athletic associations dedicated to provincial, national or international levels of competition and playing by non-modified rules sanctioned by the appropriate provincial sports governing body."

The Entertainment Standards Branch has taken the following position on the interpretation of this section. Where the applicant organization is a sporting league or association, then they may qualify for a lottery licence provided that the association supports programs for youths or minors of amateur status. Adult recreational sports leagues (or teams), or professional athletics are not justifiably charitable and are therefore not eligible for lottery licences. Similarly, individual teams or Booster Clubs established to support individual sports teams, are too narrowly focused and therefore do not qualify for lottery licences.

Certain types of sports organizations, such as Junior A or B Hockey teams (some of which are privately owned franchises) do not completely fall within the definition of minor or amateur athletics, since some members of the team are adults and/or semi-professional players. Therefore, when considering the eligibility of these types of sports organizations, lottery licences may be granted in recognition of their support for youth sporting programs provided that the league or association is the applicant organization. Once a licence is issued, the use of proceeds is limited to the minor sporting program that is geared to developing young players, educational purposes in the form of scholarships for recognized educational institutions or for protective equipment needs of the players.

While each applicant should be assessed on its own merits, the above criteria should be applied consistently when making a licensing decision pertaining to athletic organizations.

Contact: Applicable Licensing Authority (Provincial or Municipal)
Date: September 19, 1990
Page: 1 of 1



Explanatory letter for lotteries bulletin 005 — same author

Dear ________________,

Thank you for letter of ______________________ requesting clarification on the eligibility of sports organizations in obtaining lottery licences.

Lottery licences can only be issued to charitable or religious organizations. Youth sport organizations are deemed charitable for the purposes of obtaining lottery licences. However, individual sports teams benefit too few people in order to be considered charitable. Therefore, lottery licences should only be issued to the sport league considered eligible because they are recreational in nature and therefore not charitable.

Junior A or B hockey teams co not completely fall within the definition of minor sports since some members of the team are adults and/or semi-professional players. You may issue a lottery licence to the league or association of these types of sports organizations provided that the lottery money raised is only used for equipment or a scholarship program.

I hope this clarifies our position with regards to the eligibility of sports teams. Please feel free to call or write if you have any further questions.

Yours truly,

Plain language and the law: are lawyers paid by the word?

PLEA
SASKATCHEWAN

By Janet Drysdale

The public often thinks that legal writing is all gobbledygook. Bad legal writing commonly is wordy and confusing, full of herewiths, forthwiths and hereunders. Legal ideas are poorly explained — if the effort to explain things is made at all. Whether it's a traffic ticket or a contract, anything written in a dense, legalistic style and printed in small print is hard to read. Long or complex sentences mean that a reader must work harder to understand what he or she is reading.

The plain language movement challenges us to stop using legal gobbledygook. Some lawyers and other legal professionals now recognize this. They advocate using plain language to help the reader understand what is written. Plain language is now used by many governments and government agencies. It is also used by private businesses and by law firms.

In Canada, the Canadian Legal Information Centre founded its Plain Language Centre in 1988. The Centre coordinates groups using and researching plain language and advocates for its use. The Centre also provides writing services. It redesigns and rewrites documents and tests documents for readability.

Plain language is the name given to clear, understandable legal writing. Plain language writers use a vocabulary and a writing style that is suitable for the intended reader. Writers use short sentences and simple sentence structure. They take the time to organize their thoughts. Good design and layout are also a part of plain language.

Legal writing for a general audience avoids foreign words and phrases, jargon and obscure terms. Government forms should be designed for easy use both by the public and by those who process them. A complex writing style may be appropriate when writing for a specialized audience.

At the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan we use plain language in our publications. These booklets and pamphlets provide general legal information to the public. Our readers sometimes hear legal terms from lawyers, the courts or government. When we use legal terms in our booklets, we define them and explain their context.

The plain language movement recognizes that good legal writing is needed everywhere. Think of your lease, a traffic ticket, your insurance policy or a loan agreement with a bank or credit union. Think also of various government forms, for example, a driver's licence application. You need to be able to understand what you read. Plain language writers should think of their audience as they write and plan their writing.

The plain language movement aims to stimulate writers to think of their audience. The audience too can contribute to the process. The next time you read legal gobbledygook let the author know how you feel about it!

__Janet Drysdale__ works with the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan (PLEA) as a legal writer and editor. She trained as a lawyer in Ontario and worked in the Northwest Territories before joining PLEA.

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Plain language and the literacy community

By Gwen Davies

The first several articles I read about literacy were written in a fairly academic style. They were not in academic magazines, however; they were in literacy magazines. It didn't seem right to me. It wasn't long before I found others who were talking about this issue. In fact, there were many people in the literacy community who wanted to make sure anyone involved in literacy could read the articles about it. This is where I first discovered plain language.

What is plain language?

Plain language seems to mean different things to different people. To some people it means creating a clearer text — working with more common words and shorter sentences, organizing information so that it flows more logically, and designing the page so that it is easy to read. I believe this is an important step.

Plain language seems to go further when we look at it in terms of literacy. When Mary Breen of Peterborough, Ontario, wrote her health book *Taking Care*, she sat down with a group of women who would likely use the book. She asked them what information they wanted to be able to get from such a book. Then she began to write and organize the material.

When plain language is linked to literacy it means starting a writing project by finding out who the readers are, what they already know and how they will use the material. And it means testing.

Testing involves asking typical readers to read what you have written. You know what parts of the materials work when you ask your readers what they think you are trying to say. Testing shows you where you make sense to your readers and where you don't.

Plain language works for forms too

Plain language and forms is an area that is just starting to catch on. It is possible to design forms that people can fill in easily and quickly. The process is similar to that of writing. Usually, you test the questions in a form first, and then test the questions and design together. Forms seem to be something we all have to use and we all dislike using. I think it is a vital area for plain language work.

Should literacy programs be working with plain language?

This brings us to the big question the literacy organizations I worked with had to ask. What is the place of plain language in the literacy community?

Not all literacy workers know how plain language works. There are quidelines for working with written language to make it clearer. It is useful for anyone to learn to use these tools.

But there are questions too. Should literacy programs get involved in testing materials, for example. If a program does testing for local organizations, how does the testing fit in with the work learners are already doing? How does it get in the way?

Should literacy workers create plain language for other organizations? What is the responsibility of the literacy community to advocate for plain language? Does plain language really solve problems for adult learners? What are the limits?

***Gwen Davies** lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She has worked in journalism, community literacy and plain language, and has raised one curious child. All of this was good training for her present work as a plain language instructor and consultant, and fiction writer.*

Combating white collar illiteracy: teaching the learned to write

By Christine Mowat

Since 1980, I have earned my living conducting writing workshops for corporate professionals across Canada. White collar literacy is in demand. I have worked with geologists, engineers, scientists, lawyers, accountants, computer specialists, medical and government employees, politicians, middle and upper management personnel and educators.

The following three examples of business writing illustrate the range that white collar illiteracy entails. The first is a category most people immediately think of — a sentence with grammatical and punctuation problems:

I am happy to be able to tell you that a book on the subject of equality and judicial neutrality edited by Professor X and myself, will be in print by October, published by Carswells.

"Myself" is non-standard usage here. You can use "me" but a more graceful rewrite of the sentence is: "I am happy to be able to tell you that Professor X and I have edited . . ." Comma before "will be in print" separates the subject and verb. Delete comma.

The source of the letter, a university, provokes an obvious question. How can universities ensure that faculty be excellent writers? Since the English-across-the curriculum (an educational theory which claims, in part, that every teacher is a teacher of writing) movement began in Britain 15 years ago, I've seen little public discussion of this issue. I suspect that many academics would express alarm if required to submit to writing tests to qualify for university teaching.

A second example, from government, presents an easily recognizable bureaucratic face:

I utilize, and promote, a team orientated, participative style of management wherein delegations and concomitant accountability, in a results-orientated environment, are instrumental in attaining Departmental, and Corporate, objectives.

The writer acknowledged that what he meant was "My team and I work together to achieve company and departmental goals." What causes business people to create their own official dialect, laden with evasiveness, legalese, or bureaucratese?

Over the years I've noted that business writers pad their writing with over-generalized language much the way students do in essays to fill up the five-page assignment quota. As well, they guess "what the supervisor wants," as we used to guess the values and emphasis a certain professor "wanted." The need to impress others, sound authoritative, and portray one's work as complex and sophisticated results in a third category of white collar illiteracy:

Our task is to identify opportunities for leveraging the synergics inherent in our interdepartmental interfaces in order to maximize our customer need identification potential.

Such pretentious overwriting is common, not just in corporate writing, but in academic writing, too. A more straightforward expression of the above example is: "How can our departments sell more to our customers?"

Why do people in business and the professions write poorly? There are several reasons.

1. Few models of excellence in academic texts or business writing exist. Some of the worst writing emerges from graduate theses, legal contracts, business letters, government reports or legislation itself.
2. Academic writing, the model by which we largely learn to write, is a poor model for business writers. Its convoluted language, overuse of the passive voice, lack of attention to design features, and abstract and theoretical emphases are the antithesis of forceful business writing.
3. The dominant form of writing in educational institutions is the essay, a format whose use largely disappears when students emerge into the workaday world.
4. Many government and business managers or supervisors have little knowledge of modern business format options and style changes. They continue to insist on "my style," an overly formalized and stilted written language, and consistently change the writing of those they supervise.
5. A high percentage of Canadian teachers of English have no formal training in English.
6. The bulk of undergraduate essay marking is assigned to graduate students, many of whom are inadequate writers themselves.
7. Composition teaching continues to play the handmaid role to the supposedly higher status of literature teaching in colleges and universities. Such teaching duties often fall to sessional faculty.
8. Writing instructors may be unfamiliar with writing research. Of the many rich research themes over the past 25 years, perhaps the most persuasive is that writing is the sharpest tool we have to develop thinking and explore meaning. Descriptive and empirical research into the composing, revising and editing processes provides writing instructors with helpful new directions.
9. The influence of legal writing on business writing has both an honorable history and insidious consequences. One of the workshops my company teaches is called "Improving Legal Writing." With its focus on the Plain Language policies and legislation emerging in Canada it is testament to the growing democratization of legal language.
10. It takes years to become a good writer — years of writing, reading, discussing, living and working. Like it or not, writing mirrors a writer's persona, integrity, and clarity of thought.

***Christine Mowat** is the president of Wordsmith Associates, a Calgary-based communications consulting firm. A longer version of this article appeared in the* Queen's Alumni Review, *March-April, 1991.*

Plain Language

General

This bibliography is from *Plain Language: Clear and Simple*, National Literacy Secretariat, Minister of Supply and Services, Ottawa, 1991. We are using it with permission. Additional information about libraries which have the books was added by Florence Duesterbeck, Saskatchewan Provincial Library.

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PROSEBUST! Prosebusters! a division of B&B Editorial Consulting Ltd., 563 Gladstone Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 5P2.

Library Location Symbols

SCR	Chinook Regional Library, Swift Current
SMJP	Palliser Regional Library, Moose Jaw
SMJT	SIAST, Palliser Campus Library, Moose Jaw
SMSP	St. Peter's Abby and College Library, Munster
SNB	Lakeland Library Region, North Battleford
SPANC	Wapiti Regional Library, Prince Albert
SR	Regina Public Library, Regina
SRAGR	Agriculture Canada Research Station, Regina
SRDL	Saskatchewan Labour Library, Regina
SRED	Saskatchewan Education Library, Regina
SRL	Saskatchewan Legislative Library, Regina
SRP	Provincial Library, Regina
SRPCRD	Saskatchewan Power Corporation, Research and Development Centre, Regina
SS	Saskatoon Public Library, Saskatoon
SSM	St. Thomas More College Library, Saskatoon
SSSI	SIAST, Kelsey Campus Library, Saskatoon
SSU	University of Saskatchewan Library, Saskatoon
SWSE	Southeast Regional Library, Weyburn
SYP	Parkland Regional Library, Yorkton
OONL	National Library of Canada, Ottawa

Developing clear language materials with and for workers

Towards the end of 1991, **Brenda Storry** interviewed **Lori Stinson-O'Gorman** about the clear language materials which will be produced by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. The following excerpts are taken from that interview.

BS: Who's actually writing the books?

LS: The participants.

BS: So it could be anyone from any workplace?

LS: We bring in a few people who have a history of labour involvement. For instance, we have a woman who is a retired Labour Standards Officer. She'll work with our groups in developing materials — making sure the books cover things people care about. She will not only put them in clear English, but in language that we can readily understand and access.

BS: Are there specific themes for the workplace-based books?

LS: We're doing one series on different types of workplaces using material specific to the workplace. We're also doing a few of them based on different sectors such as the healthcare industry, mining and resource extraction, municipal services and the grain industry. People will base the books on their own experiences working in those industries.

The second series is about specific things we need to know, as union members or as workers in general; for instance, contracts and arbitration.

I get angry when the government comes in and wants to translate everything into nice, clear English for people. And they do it in a very patronizing manner. Our program is not like that. It involves putting documents into clearer language that's better for all of us to read. It doesn't mean just taking out all of the difficult words. If I come upon a word I don't understand, I can simply keep looking at all the other words around it, and I can figure it out from that. That's what good readers do. There's no reason to assume that everyone can't do that. We stress right through the program that we already know how to learn. We've learned how to do our jobs; we've learned how to take care of our kids; we've learned how to function in our communities. I usually argue that it takes **more** intelligence to fill the demands of your daily lives **without reading and writing**.

BS: You're hitting home for me with a lot of the things you said because I didn't learn to read or write until I was 17 years old. I had to be inventive and get people to read me things. I used to dictate my reports!

LS: Yeah, that's right! Imagine, there are tons of people like that! I got way off topic, right?

BS: Yes, the themes for the labour series material.

LS: I mentioned labour standards and occupational health and safety. What's happening is that people are using literacy as the excuse for everything. For example, we have high accident rates because workers can't read and write. That's nonsense! We have high accident rates because of unsafe working conditions, not because, as workers, some of us can't read and write! These are basically separate issues. What we want to do is look at occupational health and safety in the literacy context. What are the legal standards? And what can we do, as individuals and collectively, to make workplaces safer?

The program is very much about "liberation education." It's been really interesting. As people have been improving their reading and writing skills, they've been getting more and more active in their unions. They are trying to create more democratic unions that address their own interests.

BS: What percentage of workers will be directly affected by these materials, do you think?

LS: As many as want to be. The idea of the materials is not only that people in our programs would be able to use them. We're going to try and lay them out so that they're not just stories. They'll also give people examples of things they can do with **their** own stories, examples of how they can discuss them and broaden their own groups to bring in other people.

BS: What is the completion date for any of these materials?

LS: Materials are supposed to be done by April 30.

BS: That's kind of close!

LS: We should have a lot of it done. It's surprising when you sit down with a class how quickly they can put things together.

***Brenda Storry** is a student in the Learning Centre of the Bridging Program for Women, SIAST, Wascana Campus. Brenda is planning a career in journalism.*

Coming up in
Literacy Works

The spring issue of *Literacy Works* will focus on **Family Literacy**. Deadline for submissions is March 1.

Ideas for themes for future issues of *Literacy Works* are welcome. Contact the Saskatchewan Literacy Network in Saskatoon with your ideas, or call Liz Ormiston in Regina at 757-7236.

Back issues available

The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for $5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network:

Vol. 1, No. 2	Computers and Literacy
Vol. 1, No. 4	Aboriginal Literacy
Vol. 2, No. 1	Literacy and Health
Vol. 2, No. 2	Focus on the Learner
Vol. 3, No. 1	Women and Literacy

Plain language clear and simple

By NGL Consulting Ltd. and the National Literacy Secretariat of the Department of Multiculturism and Citizenship Canada, 1991

Review by Elizabeth Slater and Sheila Cressman

At long last governments, businesses and agencies are trying to make their written messages to the public easier to read. This manual, produced by the Department of Multiculturism and Citizenship Canada, is written for public servants. It is a guide to writing in plain or simple language. The manual tells us a Decima Research Study in 1990 found that more than three quarters of Canadians think all government documents should be written more clearly.

The manual is divided into nine short chapters.

Chapter 1 explains why the manual has been written and who its audience is. It defines Plain Language Writing and describes how the use of plain language makes documents, forms and even manuals easy to understand by people with a wide range of reading abilities.

Plain Language also saves time and money because the public has fewer questions and there are fewer errors and misunderstandings.

Chapter 2, "Before You Start Writing," prepares the writer to draft the text. The key points are:

- what the document is meant to do
- what your reader wants and needs to know
- what you need to say
- how you organize the information

Chapter 3 tells "How to Make Your Writing Effective" by:

- putting the most important ideas or information first
- addressing your readers directly
- using informal English where possible.

Clear and simple are the goals when writing Plain Language.

Chapter 4 gives advice on writing paragraphs and sentences that say what they really mean. Chapter 5 discusses choices of words, probably summed up best by Emily Carr: "Get to the point as directly as you can; never use a big word if a little one will do."

Chapter 6, "Appearances are Very Important," gives ideas for the best way to present information. It covers layout, type style and size and the use of graphics and illustrations.

The final three chapters deal with the idea of checking with some of the target audience who will read the document; or a least getting feedback by showing the document to someone else. There is a final check list and a list which contains information on available resources.

Although this manual is written for public servants, it provides an invaluable guide for anyone communicating information. All the examples are geared to government documents but the basic advice can be used in many different written texts.

In her letter of introduction to the manual Mary Gusella, Deputy Minister of Multiculturism and Citizenship Canada, says, "Only a well-informed public can exercise its rights and make full use of the opportunities provided by government programs and services." This is a prime reason for making sure people can read and understand information affecting their daily lives.

Clear writing and literacy

Prepared for the Ontario Literacy Coalition by Ruth Baldwin, 1990

Review by Elizabeth Slater and Sheila Cressman

The author, owner of a literacy consulting firm, has been working in literacy since 1979. As far back as 1983 she developed a program to help community groups understand the link between clear writing and literacy.

The booklet is a "how to" manual:

How to recognize clear writing
How to use it
How to convince others to use it.

Its aim is to give the reader "some ideas about what makes written material difficult to read and some tips on how to communicate better."

There are six sections in the booklet and each one can stand on its own. The first section defines clear writing and talks about its importance to workers in the literacy field and students. The next section describes what makes material hard to read. It also gives information on readability tests and how to use them.

Section Three gives practical suggestions for changing your writing style so you can communicate more effectively with more people. This is followed by a section showing many useful examples of clear writing.

Section Five suggest ways of convincing others in your community to begin using clear writing, and ways to involve information givers and learners. The last section contains a list of books and articles which give sources of more information about individual topics.

continued . . .

Clear writing and literacy *continued*

The basic suggestions and advice given in this booklet are very much the same as those given in Plain Language, Clear and Simple. However, this manual is written for a much wider audience. It contains more practical suggestions and examples for a variety of users.

"What makes material hard to read and understand — who decides?" (page 12) is a particularly interesting discussion on why and when you must involve the readers and students in assessing written material.

Although the author points out that readability tests have weaknesses, they may be used as one part of your analysis of written material. The results of a Fry readability graph, as described on pages 14 and 15, can measure the grade level required to read a text easily, but give no other information about that test.

Some computer programs are available which give a grade level assessment and indicate complex sentences and passive construction. They may give you suggestions as to how to improve your writing. But you must consider all the basic suggestions to be able to give a good evaluation of a text.

Another little tool, the Gobbledegook Detector, gives a quick check on the number of complex words you have used and the average number of words per sentence. It could be a useful personal guide when you do any plain language writing.

Baldwin suggests that literacy organizations can be the best advocates for clear writing (page 49). This is because they are involved with many of the readers who benefit from this material. She reminds us that "changing the way we write can make it easier for up to 22 per cent more people to begin to get information from print!"

In conclusion, in 1946 George Orwell wrote:

> *"If you simplify your English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy . . . and when you make a stupid remark, it's stupidity will be obvious, even to yourself."*
>
> Politics and the English Language.

Elizabeth Slater and Sheila Cressman *are instructors of English as a Second Language in the Wascana Campus program at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). They have worked mainly in the area of literacy for the past seven years.*

We are sorry to share the sad news that ***Sheila Cressman*** *died on Thursday, January 16, after a long fight with cancer. Sheila will be missed by her husband Doug, family in Scotland, and friends all over the world. Here in the Regina ESL/Literacy community, Sheila will be remembered by colleagues and students alike as a very professional, dedicated and caring teacher. We will miss you, Sheila!*

Memories and dreams, volumes 1 and 2

Published by the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, 1991

Review by Yvonne Ross and Elsa Turek

These two volumes would appeal to learners because they are written by learners. The stories are varied and hold the interest of the reader to the end. English as a Second Language (ESL) learners can identify with the memories, the fears, and the frustrations of the writers.

Teachers of more advanced beginners would find these volumes useful. Aside from the classroom exercises, which could be developed to go with the stories, the books could be read for sheer enjoyment.

Following are some more specific comments we have about the two volumes of *Memories and Dreams*:

- appropriate use of "white space." Pages are not full of print which may overwhelm the learner.
- the visual illustrations that accompany each story help the learner understand what he/she has read.
- large print is used making the stories easier to read.
- sentences are short and the structure of the sentences is simple.
- minimal use of contractions. The learner who recognizes the word "does" may be confused by the word "doesn't".
- few conjunctions. Learners have difficulties with such words as "if," "because," and "therefore" which require mental leaps backwards and forewards.
- no "hard" words which can usually be identified by the number of prefixes and suffixes. These built-up words have a central meaning buried in the middle and present a generalized concept, rather than the visual reality of "house" or "bus."
- a lot of personal references are used (such as pronouns, names, "father," "mother") which humanize the text. The generous use of personal references does more than almost any other factor to make the text readable as the learner is thinking in concrete rather than abstract terms.
- the stories are written in a conversational style which is easier to understand than material written in a non-oral style. The language used in newspapers, for example, is far from being "speech" English.
- the stories are meaningful and interesting to the learner as they portray real life experiences.
- material is aimed at adults whom we feel would be at an advanced beginner level if they are ESL learners.

continued . . .

Memories and dreams, volumes 1 and 2 *continued*

- we did not like the British spelling — "aeroplane".
- if used in the classroom, a teacher's guide could be developed which would aid in giving teachers various ideas for exercises for multi-levels and contain exercises on comprehension questions, "cloze exercises" and "strip stories" (comprehension exercises used in literacy and language teaching). For example, a more advanced class could do exercises using reported speech and adding story endings. A lower level class could do scrambled sentence exercises.

***Yvonne Ross** has been teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) since 1980. She has taught Literacy, Basic English, Occupational English, English for Specific Purposes and Employment Access.*

***Elsa Turek** has been teaching ESL since 1980. She has taught Basic English and Occupational English at Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). Prior to 1980, she tutored in an adult learn to read program at the Regina Public Library.*

FRONTIER COLLEGE PRESENTS

CLEAR LINES

How to Compose and Design Clear Language Documents

Who: Human Resources Managers, Trainers, Consultants, and anyone interested in clear language training

Where: Toronto

When: February 20, March 26, April 23, May 28, 1992

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literacy in the workplace and how clear language fits in;
the basic principles of clear language writing and document design.

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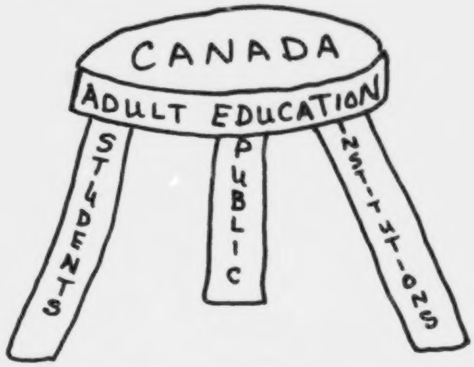
Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) Link

By Elsie Livingston



Consider the three-legged stool model of bringing about change. During 1991 I wrote in *Literacy Works* about students (Summer issue) and institutions (Fall issue) involved in Adult Education.

Most students are self-directed learners. They are discovering their power and competence as they organize into student groups.

The task of institutions is to help students set goals, plan, and learn how to learn. Institutions include teachers, colleges, literacy networks and the government. Therefore, institutions must provide the resources and not be so wrapped up in technicalities, marketing and budgets that they lose sight of what Adult Literacy is about in the first place.

Now let us focus on the public. You will recognize that we are all part of the public as Canadian citizens. Dr. Allen Tough, a professor of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Adult Education, points out that about 90 per cent of Canadian adults "are making a deliberate effort to learn something each year."

I see a distinct similarity between the general Canadian public and the specific learner with her tutor or the student in his Adult Basic Education class. We can identify with each other because all of us are involved in learning some of the same things: getting information from the library; getting involved in the political process; learning parenting skills; becoming better workers; travelling or exploring new interests.

The **Movement for Canadian Literacy** aims to include all who support literacy. We must speak up to those around us - friends, family, neighbours, co-workers, the media. Inform them so that they will join the "movement," too. They will learn how access to Adult Literacy and Basic Education can bring about change in a country like Canada. Then they will realize the need to support literacy programs with our tax dollars.

Elsie Livingston *is Saskatchewan Representative to the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL).*

Organizing Adult Literacy and Basic Education in Canada
A policy and practice discussion document

Single copies are available free from:
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Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6K7
Telephone: (613) 563-2464

NETWORK NEWS — Winter, 1992

1. **Board news**

We were very pleased with the large attendance at the Annual General Meeting which was held in Regina. Workshops on the MCL Good Practice document, plain language and proposal writing were very well received; a special drama workshop for learners was also popular with participants.

The new board comprises people from across the province and from a wide variety of backgrounds and should serve the Network well over the year. We will soon begin planning for the 1992 AGM; please let us know if there are special topics you would like to have included in the program.

The board/staff retreat was held in October at Sage Hill Conference Centre. It served as an orientation and get acquainted session and participants began planning for the year's activities. The following committees were established: Learners, Practitioners, Communications and Marketing, Fund-raising and Family Literacy. Retiring board members were presented with a plaque in recognition of their service.

The board has agreed that the Network will be the provincial contact for the National Adult Literacy Database and we are looking forward to this adventure into modems and electronic mail. By January, 1992, the Network will be able to send faxes directly from the office as well as access information about literacy activities more quickly.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! to our 1991 donors:

Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation
CBC Radio Saskatchewan
COLES Bookstores
International Association of Business Communicators
Mary Scorer Bookstore, Saskatoon
News Papers in Education, Saskatoon Star Phoenix
2nd Street United Church Women, Saskatoon

2. **Student support**

The committee will begin meeting in January to plan for a provincial meeting in Spring, 1991. The goal is to establish a provincial learner action group. Committee members are:

Sandra Byers	Saskatoon
Keppel Disney	Saskatoon
Wilbert Genoves	Swift Current
Larry Innes	Saskatoon
Alan Kobe	Saskatoon
Lynda Mageri	North Battleford
Carlos Mendez	Yorkton
Ken Severight	Yorkton
Elsie Livingston (MCL)	Prince Albert
Sharon Skage (staff)	Prince Albert

Local support groups are meeting in Saskatoon, Yorkton and Regina.

3. **Practitioners**

Although the committee will not begin meeting until January, committee members have already helped with reviewing terms for the National Literacy Thesaurus and resource materials for Satellite Communications Network. A main concern will be the issue of accreditation for tutors and practitioners.

The major event for practitioners this year will be the Prairie Literacy Institute (see advertisement in this issue). The Institute will include three courses plus afternoon seminars on numerous ESL topics.

Local practitioners groups meet regularly in Regina, Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

4. **1991-92 Projects**

- **Family Literacy:** This is one of the Network's most exciting projects this year. A number of excellent presentations have been booked for the "Soaring Into Literacy" conference in Regina, May 7-9, 1992. Of special interest is a presentation by Mary Gordon, of the Adult Outreach Department of The Toronto School Board. Mary is a strong advocate of family literacy.

  Advisory Committees have been established in both Regina and Saskatoon. These provide direction for the project and allow for sharing of information between participants. The Network has provided assistance to two school projects in Saskatoon and will be supporting the development of projects in Regina. The Network is also interested in promoting family literacy workshops for Adult Basic Education programs. Coordinators who wish more information should contact the office.

  Information about these projects will be published through the provincial Reading Council's newsletter and in the next issue of *Literacy Works*.

- **Community Initiatives:** Many literacy groups are anxious to develop partnerships with other groups in their communities for the promotion of literacy. The staff of the business literacy project of the Regina Public Library will be sharing their perspectives and experience on this topic at a workshop in Saskatoon. The Network will assist local communities in the development of partnerships.

- **Interagency Cooperation:** The Network will be sharing office space and equipment with SCENES over the winter. Florence Sidorak will be working for SCENES on a part-time basis and will be answering phones for us. We look forward to further discussions with SABEA and SCENES about common problems and strategies.

We are still looking for committee members from other regions. Please contact the office if you would like more information.

5. **Publications**

- *Memories and Dreams* (Volumes 1 and 2) — the first two volumes of the New Writers series are now available. We are very proud of these books and look forward to the final 3 volumes in the series which will be published in early 1992.
- *On Our Way* has moved to SIAST Woodland Campus in Prince Albert. Its new phone number is 953-5308. Its mailing address is still Box 3003, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan S6V 6G1.
- *What's News* — remember to submit your news by the 15th of the month. Our circulation is over 1000!

6. **Congratulations!**

Alan Kobe, of Saskatoon, who is well-known in Saskatchewan and national learner organizations, married Betty Peters on October 26, 1991. Congratulations and best wishes to Alan and Betty!

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association (SABEA) Conference will be held February 26 to 28 in Saskatoon. This tenth anniversary event will be an opportunity for adult educators to think about and plan for the next decade of Adult Basic Education.

Saskatchewan Association of Life Long Learning (SALL) will hold its 20th anniversary event, April 28 to 30 in Saskatoon. All individuals interested in life long learning are welcome. The event will include workshops on Instructional Methods, Distance Education, Time Management and Adult Education. SALL will be developing a special 90 minute program for adult educators which will be broadcast on SCN in 1992.

Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) will hold an international conference, "Breaking the Barriers- Equity and Access in Adult Education," June 17 to 20 in Regina. The conference will be of interest to practitioners, instructors, students and administrators. Speakers will include Neil McDonald, Rosemary Brown, Pauline Coulture and Elijah Harper. For information telephone (306) 787-4281.

Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English Speakers (SCENES) has published a 31-page booklet entitled "Where to Learn English as a Second Language in Saskatchewan." It's available from the Network office. Send $1 to cover postage and handling.

REQUEST FOR EASY-TO-READ HEALTH MATERIALS

DO YOU KNOW OF ANY GOOD, EASY-TO-READ HEALTH MATERIALS? If so, Alpha Ontario and the Literacy and Health Project of the Ontario Public Health Association would like to hear from you. We are working together to build a collection at Alpha Ontario which will include:

- ✔ easy-to-read health materials (booklets, videos, fact sheets);
- ✔ information about developing these materials;
- ✔ information on the relationship between literacy and health.

To make this collection as comprehensive as possible, we need your help. If you know of any suitable materials in French, English or any other language, we would like to receive copies to include in the collection. If this is not possible, please describe the materials (e.g. pamphlet, fact sheet) and state author, title, publisher/producer/affiliated organization. Please send any information to:

Alice Freke, Project Assistant
Literacy and Health Project
c/o Ontario Public Health Association
468 Queen St. #202
Toronto, Ontario M5A 1T7
Telephone: (416) 367-3313
Fax: (416) 367-2844

Ontario Public Health Association
Literacy and Health Project
Phase II: Partners in Practice

CALL FOR COMMUNITY LITERACY AND HEALTH PROJECTS

One out of every five Canadian adults is an unskilled reader. Since most health and safety information is written for skilled readers, people with reading problems have much less access to the information they need to make informed choices about their health.

The Literacy and Health Project is addressing this problem by encouraging **partnerships** between health and literacy workers. By working together, truly accessible materials and health promotion programs can be developed. For example, health workers at a prenatal clinic might work with a literacy group to develop innovative ways to make their information accessible to women with lower reading skills. Or, a literacy group might work with a workplace safety committee to develop readable safety information.

If you are a health worker or a literacy worker who is interested in developing a **community-based literacy and health project,** please call either Mary J. Breen or Alice Freke at the Literacy and Health Project, (416) 367-3313.

Letters to Literacy Works

Dear Literacy Works:

I am very pleased and excited about the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. As an instructor of Driver Education for a number of years, I realize how important it is to understand the rules of the road and literacy plays a key role in helping people understand these rules.

Students of any age can safely learn to drive a vehicle, if they have perseverance and appreciation of the rules that are so necessary. In the early years of wheels, there were not too many vehicles or roads on which to drive them. The self-taught driver could go from point A to point B without encountering even one other vehicle, and the speed was much slower than today. Almost anyone could learn to stop and start the engine and, through trial and error, move it along the country roads.

Today, with so many drivers and so many vehicles on the roads, an understanding of the more complex rules of the road is essential to safety. However, self-taught drivers are still in the traffic scene today, unfortunately. In addition, many people who wish to learn to drive are unable to do so due to lack of the basic literacy skills needed to study the Drivers Handbooks and write the examination.

To help some of these drivers, I made a request, in 1989, to the Saskatchewan Government Insurance for permission to produce an audio cassette reading of "The Rules of the Road" included in the official Saskatchewan Drivers Handbook. Permission was granted and this "plain language" cassette has been useful to people who do not comprehend what they are reading but who wish to get their Learners License.

I am now preparing a plain language print publication, the "Driver's Guide" to help people learn the information necessary to obtain their Driver's License.

I'd also like to share with Literacy Works readers some information about Safety City, to be built in Fort Qu'Appelle. The intention of this program is to build a model city, hopefully in the Echo Valley Centre area, where children, youth and other learners can become familiar with the street markings and traffic signs found on our highways and in our towns. The Safety Reach Society has been working on this project since 1986. The City would give people of all ages the opportunity to learn traffic safety without the dangers of real traffic, but with the facilities of the real traffic world. It would be an "Educational Resort" with opportunities for everyone. We hope that Saskatchewan people, and especially the communities around Fort Qu'Appelle, will see the need to build this miniature city here.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage volunteers in all walks of life and particularly in the field of literacy. It is rewarding!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Doreen Harman
Driver Education

***Editor's Note**: Audio cassettes of "The Rules of the Road" can be obtained for $10 from Doreen Harman, Box 265, Fort Qu'Appelle, Sask. S0G 1S0. Proceeds from the cassettes go to the Safety City fund.*

Saskatchewan Literacy Network

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LITERACY W•O•R•K•S

Vol. 3, No. 3 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network Spring 1992

Family Literacy

Price: $5.00 for non-members (includes tax)

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Literacy Works Editor: Liz Ormiston
Editorial Committee for this issue: Ved Arora, Hilary Craig, Brenda Storry

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without permission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236. Fax: c/o Brenda Storry (306) 787-9560.

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Breaking the cycle of illiteracy

By Nayda Veeman

Family literacy is one of the current buzz words in literacy circles. There are a number of family literacy activities going on in Canada but only limited awareness of them. What is "family literacy" anyway?

Family literacy is the term used to refer to activities which encourage the development of literacy in children and their care givers. The term "intergenerational literacy" is sometimes used to denote that adults other than parents may be involved in family literacy programs. Personally, I think this word is too big so I prefer to use the term family literacy in a broad sense.

Family literacy programs are extremely varied but their main goal is to "break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy." In many cases the participating adults may have extremely limited reading skills and would not be interested in other types of literacy training.[1] The role of the family in school achievements cannot be underemphasized as "reading aloud to children is the single most important factor in preparing them to read."[2]

School teachers and adult educators have their own reasons for being involved in family literacy. On the one hand, children from so-called disadvantaged backgrounds often have problems in school. Whether English is a second language for them or they come from an oral tradition,[3] these children present a special challenge to the school system. On the other hand, adults with very limited reading skills may lack the confidence or motivation to participate in adult literacy programs and keeping them in the programs is often a problem.

Adults with limited literacy skills are often inhibited by the literate environment of the school. They may also have negative memories of their own school experiences. They may have difficulty reading school newsletters and report cards and, in general, avoid putting themselves in situations where they will feel uncomfortable. They usually do not believe they can offer much to help their children learn.

In family literacy programs, the emphasis is not on "fixing up" the parents but rather on the fun of reading and reading related activities. The key is to create a comfortable environment which welcomes the participation of the adults. Auerbach cautions against teaching parents to do school-like activities at home. She argues for the need to respect the strengths of parents and to take the reality of their lives into account in the design of programs.[4]

Currently, most of the reference materials on family literacy are American.

The main centres are the Push Literacy Action Now in Washington and the National Centre for Family Literacy in Kentucky. A high profile funding source is the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

Family literacy initiatives in Canada are most numerous in Ontario, where a Family Literacy Coalition was established in 1988. In Pincher Creek, Alberta, students from Grades 2-9 who were reading below grade level were matched with volunteer tutors; pairs met two to three times per week and in most cases there was significant improvement in reading levels (see article, page 21). This model could be adapted in parts of Saskatchewan where the number of tutors exceeds the number of participating adult learners.

In Saskatchewan, family literacy is in its infancy. In this issue of *Literacy Works*, you will find several articles on new family literacy projects happening in Saskatchewan.

Family literacy is a field of growing interest to adult educators and librarians. It has long seemed to me that the K-12 system and adult education work in splendid isolation of each other and I see family literacy as a win-win way of bridging the gap between the two. I am arguing for the need to take a more holistic view in the attempt to find new and more cooperative ways of dealing with old problems. I am convinced that the resulting synergy will more than offset the effort needed to get new programs started.

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***Nayda Veeman** has been Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network since its founding. She has worked in adult education for the past ten years.*

A longer version of this article was published in QUERY, *21:1, 1992, Saskatchewan Reading Council.*

Family literacy takes off in Saskatchewan

By Nayda Veeman

Over the past year, the Saskatchewan Literacy Network has attempted to stimulate the development of family literacy projects in the province. This article provides an overview of some of the activities which have been conducted under the auspices of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network and other agencies.

Saskatchewan Literacy Network activities

In July, 1991, the Saskatchewan Literacy Network received funds from the National Literacy Secretariat to promote family literacy. The project's goals are to increase awareness of family literacy activities through publications and meetings and to support the establishment of family literacy programs.

Advisory committees have been established in Saskatoon and Regina. The committees bring together representatives from immigrant settlement agencies, libraries, adult education programs, newspapers and adult tutoring programs. New committee members are always welcome. Please contact the Network office if you would like more information.

Saskatoon activities

In Saskatoon, the Network has initiated a literacy project at Mayfair School and has also served in a consulting role to staff at Bishop Roborecki School. The Mayfair School project is a pilot project which has relied on many of the ideas developed by teachers at Pleasant Hill Community School. (For more information on these ideas see Graves, L.R. Richert, "Promoting Reading: A Caring Partnership Approach," Literacy in Classrooms, Canadian Teachers Federation, June 1991, pp. 1-60).

Following are some of the activities which have been conducted at Mayfair and Bishop Roborecki Schools:

- reading incentives (small books and literacy materials donated by READ Canada-Saskatchewan)
- reading buddies (students paired with high school students)
- celebrity readers
- family night at the local branch library ($25 gift certificate donated by Cole's Books)
- a serialized children's story published in the newspaper
- evening workshops for parents of Kindergarten – Grade 3 students conducted by resource room teachers. Topics include tips on reading and writing. A door prize donated by a local business resulted in 75 people attending the December workshop!
- a presentation by READ Canada on reading circles

The classroom teacher at Mayfair remarks that the attitude of children to reading has changed markedly since the activities started in late September.

Regina activities

There is interest in establishing a community based program at the Albert Branch Library. The library has been providing inservice training to day care workers (see article, page 12).

Prince Albert activities

Three workshops were conducted for adult literacy students on "Reading with Your Kids." Evaluation suggested that a longer series of workshops would be preferable. READ Canada held a similar workshop for adult basic education students in Saskatoon.

READ Canada activities

READ Canada is a branch of Frontier College and READ Canada activities are funded by Frontier College. There are two staff members based in Regina, Diane Heliwell-Cote and Leona Fayzant. They can be reached at 347-3077. Diane and Leona travel throughout the province promoting reading. Leona is responsible for rural reserves across the province and Diane is responsible for urban schools. Diane and Leona are willing to meet with any group interested in establishing a community based reading circle.

Observations

During my work in this area, I have been forced to reexamine some of my basic assumptions. Many parents do not recognize the importance of reading to their preschoolers. Indeed, for those who are embarrassed to read aloud, even reading simple books may be a big challenge. By modelling the reading of children's books in workshops for parents and helping them build their oral reading confidence, educators can both reinforce literacy skills in adults and encourage the development of positive attitudes toward reading in families.

***Nayda Veeman** is Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. This article was originally written for* QUERY, *21:2, 1992, Saskatchewan Reading Council.*

Centres involve parents early

By Mary Gordon

Home may well be where the heart is but it is also where the all important early literacy skills are learned. Every parent tries to do their best for their child yet the cards are dealt unevenly. Parents who are illiterate pass on a legacy of illiteracy.

The preschool years spent in the home have a critical impact on the child's potential to read. The family is not only the security base for the child but it is within the family that attitudes toward reading are formed. The power of the family to influence the child's future success in literacy has been given voice by the family literacy movement.

The family literacy movement, or the intergenerational approach, looks to the family as the change agent in breaking the cycle of illiteracy. Research has confirmed what we all know: children brought up in a literate family environment where books, magazines and newspapers are part of everyday life, are likely to be literate. Conversely, children brought up in a print free environment, where reading is not valued, start school at a five year disadvantage.

In 1981, the Toronto Board of Education initiated Parenting Centres in its inner city schools. The goal of the programs was to improve educational outcomes for children by involving the family with the school early and by offering support and information to parents in their role of child rearing.

Parents, usually mothers, grandmothers or babysitters, drop in to the school with their children (infants to six year olds). The adults plan their own activities while the children enjoy a play based program. Information on a broad range of community resources is shared so that families can help themselves to the services they need. Bread and butter issues are addressed before parenting issues are dealt with.

The centres have a relaxed family atmosphere. The families are read to many times a day. Poetry, finger plays, singing and music are a part of every session. Meaningful print is evident throughout the 30 centres. As these programs are multicultural and multilingual, the print is in the language of the participants as well as in English. Teenage mothers as well as Portuguese grandmothers have learned how to read so that they can read to their children or grandchildren.

Each Parenting Centre has a multilingual book lending library for the children and low literacy books for the adults. Textless books are the order of the day as every parent can have a successful book experience with their child in the home while teaching them left to right progression and how to tell a story from pictures. Story tapes are borrowed along with a children's tape recorder so that parents are taught strategies which help them to read to their children. Books, magazines and newspapers are given to parents to keep at home. In support of play at home, each centre is equipped with a toy library.

Working from the Parenting Centres with parents in a respectful, inclusive way

raises the parents' self-esteem and empowers them to be advocates for their children's education. The informal visits from teachers and principals to the Parenting Centres go a long way to even the power imbalance that many low literacy parents feel in our schools.

We find that by demystifying the school system to parents they are far more likely to become involved with their children's education. Parents will show up for interviews and help in the classroom when they understand jargon such as "literature-based reading programs" or "invented spelling" and when they feel welcomed by teachers.

The key partners who need to communicate to start the assault on illiteracy are the elementary school teachers who teach emergent literacy, the family which provides the backdrop for literacy acquisition and the teachers of adult literacy and upgrading. In our schools, we need to help teachers see illiterate parents as being the possible cure for school failure rather than the cause. Perhaps an interministerial approach to illiteracy would be a more comprehensive way to address the problem.

In Parenting Centres, families are given the encouragement, the information and the tools to transform their homes into places where literacy can flourish.

Mary (Dyer) Gordon *grew up in Newfoundland. She has been involved with family literacy through the education system in Toronto since 1981. Mary is responsible for initiating and supervising inner city school-based parenting programs which support and promote family literacy.*

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Fax: (416) 393-9952

In North Battleford, Saskatchewan —

Born to Read: a family literacy project

By Ed Merkosky

Illiteracy is a serious, universal problem which is everyone's concern. It cannot be ignored. It won't go away. Efforts to this point to improve the situation have been successful only to a limited degree. It is necessary, therefore to find better ways to tackle the problem.

Thinking about this can be very depressing. But, feeling depressed doesn't help at all. So, positive action needs to be taken.

What better way to resolve a problem than to get at its source? We must get the home more involved in the struggle against illiteracy. By creating an interest in reading in very young children, we can get the parents to assume a greater role in developing in their children a genuine love for reading. Once the seed is planted, both parents and children will nurture it!

Children from "Born To Read" homes will begin their school experience with the mindset that reading is macho . . . great, . . . the thing to do! Won't their teachers have a ball? (While writing this I got a call from a tutor on another subject. I told her what I was doing and here's what she said. "I read to my little girl from when she was tiny, and now she reads like crazy!")

I discussed my ideas with a few people at work and from our combined reflection "Born To Read" came about.

We sought out and received assistance from a number of community groups: the hospital, nurses, library board and workers, Read Battlefords volunteer tutors, students, and the regional college. The media have indicated wholehearted support. I'll try to encapsulate the project.

With grant money received from the Secretary of State, we will hire a coordinator who will set up the program and supervise it. Each mother of a new baby will be introduced to the program before leaving the hospital. By blasting off on September 8, 1992, we will get some advantage from media coverage for National Literacy Day. This day will see special programs at the hospital and library, with all the fanfare and hoop-la that such an occasion deserves. Each mother and baby will be properly feted through recognition and appropriate gifts.

On her visit to each home, the health nurse will be accompanied by a volunteer tutor who will outline what the library has to offer for both mother and child. With this arrangement, the nurturing of the mind as well as the body will be stressed.

Four times during the year mothers and their infants will visit the library where a special program will be presented. Appropriate reading material will be featured in an area of the library especially set up for "Born To Read." And, of course, there'll be gifts along with the program.

On September 8, 1993 the first successful year of "Born To Read" will come to a close. The library will put on a huge birthday party for hundreds of mothers with their children. It'll go; wait and see!

The impact of the first year on community groups — business, social and others

— will be such that, once initial funding from the Secretary of State has ended, community organizations will vie for the privilege of becoming a part of "Born To Read" and becoming its sponsors.

***Ed Merkosky** spent the working years of his adult life in the field of education. At retirement, he felt he should find something leisurely to do which related to his earlier career. The opportunity to work as Literacy Coordinator for the regional college in North Battleford seemed ideal. The work is far from leisurely, but he enjoys it and feels he is contributing more than he would by riding a golf cart or lolling in a fishing boat waiting for a bite.*

In Centralia, Illinois —

Libraries seek to turn babies into lifelong readers

By Josephine N. Thompson

Last year, the Centralia Public Library in Centralia, Illinois began its "Babies First" program to encourage parents of newborns to read to their babies. The library presents programs at prenatal classes and asks the parents to fill out a "Babies First" information sheet, thus establishing personal contact between the parent and the library.

During the class, the library provides a flyer about the children's department of the library, a library card application, an easy-to-read board book, and a specially designed information calendar covering the first 14 months of a baby's development. Divided by stages, rather than by months, the calendar includes parenting tips, a book list for parent and child, and encouraging words for parents.

When the baby is three months, six months, nine months and 12 months old, the library sends out newsletters including guidelines and suggestions for parents. On the baby's first birthday, the parents and child are invited to a party in the library. The library photographs the baby, gives the parents another board

continued . . .

Libraries seek to turn babies into lifelong readers *continued*

book for the baby, and has "lap-sits" (story time) for the children and their parents.

A Centralia librarian contacted by *The Ladder* said the program has reached about 750 families in its first year. An interesting point, she noted, is that if the mother wants to have someone with her in the delivery room, the law requires that person to attend the prenatal classes with the mother. So the law has enabled "Babies First" to reach additional people beyond the mother. The estimated annual cost of the program is $3,000, exclusive of the library staff's salaries. The program is funded mainly by donations, and has been endorsed by the library board, the local hospital, the Salvation Army and the Reading Link, an adult literacy program sponsored by the local community college.

The Centralia program is just one of many library programs for parents of newborns nationwide, according to the "Action Exchange" column in the March 1991 issue of *American Libraries* magazine. A librarian had written in to the column inquiring how many of her peers have library programs for parents of newborns. The magazine received about 30 responses to that question, many more than could be published, according to Emily Melton, editor of "Action Exchange." Melton told *The Ladder* that the responses tended to come from small towns and, although all areas of the country were represented, the Midwest predominated. She added that most libraries responding said they included in their packets a bibliography, a fact sheet about the library, a library card application, and some sort of book for the baby. Melton called these programs an "innovative idea because librarians have always wanted to make lifelong readers of their patrons, and this is a practical way to do that."

A typical packet is distributed by Sterling Memorial Library in Baytown, Texas. The library's director of publication information distributes packets, packaged in plastic bags labelled "The Library Welcomes Your Baby," through hospital marketing directories, obstetricians and pediatricians, and new-baby nurseries at local hospitals within the library's service area. The packets include a description of library services for very young children, an invitation to story times when the child turns three, and information on early childhood development and tips for reading to children. By mimeographing materials in the library on inexpensive paper, printing costs are kept low. The annual cost of the packets is under $1,000.

Libraries may see the descriptions and samples sent in to "Action Exchange" by sending a request to the American Library Association (ALA) Headquarters Library on an ALA-approved interlibrary loan form or via the OCLC ILL subsystem using the symbol IEH.

***Josephine N. Thompson** is a freelance writer living in Bethesda, Maryland.*

This article is reprinted from The Ladder, *May/June, 1991.* The Ladder *is published by Push Literacy Action Now, 1332G Street, SE, Washington, DC, 20003.*

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In Lac La Martre, Northwest Territories —

Mom's and Tot's Program prepares kids for school

By Maureen Frizzell

Last year, as a volunteer literacy worker, I had the opportunity to initiate the first Mom's and Tot's English Literacy Program in the settlement of Lac La Martre, Northwest Territories.

My work with the regular basic education class, and my conversations with the school staff, led me to the conclusion that the parents of the village knew little about how to prepare their children for the world of school. Many of them were young mothers who would benefit by the development of their own literacy skills.

The Dogrib Divisional Board of Education had developed a preschool parenting kit called "Helping Our Children." We used this as the basis for the program. In it the five basic skills of self-help, body and movement, language, socialization and thinking were studied.

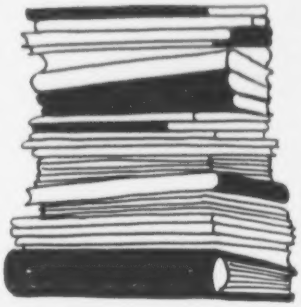
The program became a cooperative venture between the Dogrib Divisional Board, the Peter Gzowski Golf Tournament Fund, the Mezi Community School and myself. The idea had now mushroomed from being a literacy program for parents centering on childhood development to include an accompanying preschool for the children.

With the assistance of the K-1-2 teacher, a program was developed for the preschool that would parallel the learning activities of the adults. For the first hour of the program, the parents studied the skill in the literacy classroom while their children practised the skill in the kindergarten room. After a coffee, juice and cookie break for all concerned, the parents and children took part in a joint activity associated with the skill.

In the language skill section, for instance, the parents discussed the topic, listed questions they might ask about a story, practiced sequencing and were given a child's book to learn to read and talk about with their child. After the break, each parent and child sat around the room in a comfortable spot to read and discuss the books.

As we repeated the lesson later in the week and with another group, it was possible for the parents to be helpers with those children and experience the preschool side of program.

***Maureen Frizzell** worked last year as a Volunteer-in-Ministry with the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots serving as a literacy worker in Lac La Martre from September 1990 to July 1991. She is now in a one year term position as Coordinator of Community Literacy Programs for Arctic College, Thebacha Campus, Fort Smith, N.W.T.*



In Regina, Saskatchewan —

Day care workers get storytime tips

By Helen Lerach

Reading skills are learned long before a child goes to school. The home provides a child's first reading environment, because literacy is about language. We use ordinary language to get things done and to make connections and we *read* to a child for the same reasons we *talk* to him or her. It all begins with the songs that a parent, grandmother or a babysitter sing to a baby. And later on, the continuing rhymes and stories that a child loves to hear prepare him or her for patterns in literature. Listening comprehension must come before reading comprehension. Playing with language, the sequence of a story, the skills of prediction and concentration are subtly being developed as an adult and a child share a most pleasurable activity — reading a book together.

Literacy has always been an intergenerational concept. In early times, oral storytelling, street songs and games were enjoyed and passed on — part of tribal and family traditions. The introduction of the printing of books meant that many rhymes and stories would now become permanent treasures for future generations. Modern technology has allowed us to be exposed to stories from around the world and from different eras. A new literature-based curriculum is used in schools, and libraries offer an appealing collection of books and other materials free of charge.

Literacy is more than mere decoding of words. It is a social experience that develops a child's imagination and helps him to find meaning in life. This is the most important aspect of reading picture books to preschoolers. Language, thought and feeling are inseparable. With so much more to learn and a greater need for critical thinking, today's child needs books more than ever.

Libraries often offer storytime programs for children and their parents. Realizing that many children are unable to attend these programs because many of them are in day care centres, Regina Public Library provides storytime sessions, special puppet shows and selected collections of materials to daycares. In 1989, these services were extended by the Day Care Resource Project. Funded by the Child Care Initiative Fund of Health and Welfare Canada, the project resource person assists day care workers in the planning and delivery of storytime programs to three to five year old children in their centres. The work includes demonstration storytimes and workshops on nursery rhymes, songs, feltboard stories and other components of story programs. A *Storytime Handbook for Day Care Workers* has been compiled as a continuing resource, and newsletters will give more information on books and many ideas for presenting lively programs. The day care resource person trains workers in nonprofit subsidized centres in southern Saskatchewan as well as Regina.

In total, 42 day care centres are serviced reaching approximately 300 workers and 1,000 children. For both the caregivers and the children, reading is portrayed as an enjoyable activity. It is hoped that in their centres day care workers will try to choose the best books and to plan storytime programs that are fun, varied and stimulating.

There are some trends in society that have affected early exposure to books. The advent of television, sound cassettes and videos — all new ways of storytelling — mean that less time is available for personal conversation and book reading. The mass production of popular books, which are sold cheaply, makes them more available than the best ones which have beautiful illustrations and enchanting language. A greater number of parents are working outside the home, leaving them with little time or energy for sharing books. Nevertheless, reading good stories and poetry to a child in the first five years of his life has a most significant impact because he or she is so receptive.

Preschoolers who are consistently read to, and have paper, pencils and crayons to use, and who have books, newspapers and magazines surrounding them, have an amazing headstart at becoming literate. It is an intergenerational responsibility. All that children need are enthusiastic storytellers — parents, grandparents, day care workers, teachers, librarians, older children. In these times, more than ever, it is a necessary partnership. Because of its patterns, sequences, details and connections, the picture book is a lifeline to literacy and to self-directed learning. And besides, reading a picture book to a preschooler can be one of the best parts of your day!

***Helen Lerach** is a former elementary and high school teacher who has worked for Regina Public library as a library assistant, presenting many book-related programs. She is presently the Day Care Resource Person at Regina Public Library, and is enjoying her work with the children and adults in day care centres.*

For more information contact:

Regina Public Library
P.O. Box 2311, 2311 – 12th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3Z5
(306) 777-6038

In Brooks, Alberta —

Homespun: reading made in the home

By Bonnie Annicchiarico

Parents are the first teachers children meet. From birth on, children's experiences affect their success in becoming literate individuals. The success of the school literacy program frequently depends on the literacy environment at home (Morro , 1989, 2.23).

Family literacy programs operate on the belief that the roots of literacy are in the home. I have always been one to believe in finding the root of the problem. As an adult literacy coordinator working with volunteer tutors and adults with reading difficulties, I soon realized that no matter how much money was spent, no matter how many volunteer hours given, we were not going to solve the literacy crisis within our nation by dealing with the results of the problem. At Brooks Campus, Medicine Hat College, we began to investigate the alternatives. The result was Homespun, a family literacy project funded by the National Secretariat and Province of Alberta.

Participants in the program meet weekly to read and discuss children's literature and share ideas on reading with children. Parents are encouraged to read and write for themselves and their children in order to be positive role models. Personal journals encourage reflection and other parents in the program provide support. At the culmination of the class, parents write books that tell the special and private story of their child's birth. The hardcover books are presented with great pride to each child.

Results from the first year of Homespun show positive effects in a number of areas. Parents learned to identify and respond to their children's literacy behaviours. They learned to relate to their children as they shared with other parents. Parents' own literacy behaviours often changed as they became involved in responding to literature and modeling for their children. In requesting feedback from participants, parents reported that they:

- became more comfortable reading out loud with their children
- noticed changes in their own attitudes about reading. One parent in particular believes that she has changed from a nonreader to a reader because of Homespun
- felt successful as they helped their children
- became interested in writing as a result of the writing they did in class for their children
- enjoyed taking the books home and sharing them with their children
- received helpful ideas within class and from other parents on how to improve their children's literacy experience
- reported much more discussion with their children about books
- shared ideas and values
- felt the quality of time with their children improved
- felt their children asked more questions about stories
- reported that their children enjoyed stories more

As our first year of operation draws to a close, we are busy rewriting curriculum and re-evaluating the program. One thing we are certain of: family literacy is preventive. Programs such as Homespun reach both parent and child and offer families opportunities to communicate and interact through the magic of reading.

Bonnie Annicchiarico is coordinator of the Homespun program in Brooks, Alberta. As a teacher and mother of three young children, Bonnie brings a number of perspectives to the family literacy concept. She is currently completing her Master of Arts in Reading and Writing at the University of Calgary. For further information on Homespun contact:

Homespun
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Prairie Literacy Institute Update

The First Prairie Literacy Institute
July 13-24, 1992
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon

COURSES — **Concurrent (9-12 each morning)**
- Literacy Development I, Instructor: Jean Reston, Adult Education Consultant, NWT
  A course for new tutors and practitioners.
- Literacy Development II, Instructor: Mary Norton, PhD and Literacy Consultant, Alberta
  A course for experienced tutors and practitioners.
- Learning Differences, Challenges, and Difficulties, Instructor: Robin Millar, Adult Learning Specialist, Manitoba Literacy Office.

AFTERNOON SEMINARS (2-5 pm) — available free of charge to all PLI delegates; ($25 per seminar for interested others).
- July 14: Cross Cultural Communication, Saskatoon Open Door Society.
- July 15th: ESL: Pronunciation, Pam Ridgway, ESL Instructor.
- July 16th: Strategies for ESL Learners, Jeanette Dean, ESL Instructor.
- July 22: Basic Numeracy
- July 23: Numeracy for Learning disabled Learners, Marla Kowalchuk, SIAST Instructor.

REGISTRATION/TUITION FEE: $200. Includes one course and any afternoon seminars, accommodation for out-of-town delegates from prairies and Northwest Territories.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: April 15 for three prairie provinces and Northwest Territories registrants. (Each has 15 seats reserved; after April 15 registration will be open to others.) May 1st, 1992 final registration. — June 26th deadline for afternoon seminars only.

In Prince Albert, Saskatchewan —

Parents find pleasure in reading to their children

By Lorraine Passler and Elsie Livingston

The Family Reading Program was developed and delivered by Elsie Livingston to give students in the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program at SIAST, Woodland Campus in Prince Albert a real purpose for reading, and an immediate reward in terms of the pleasure derived in reading to their children. Many of these students had never been read to as children and, therefore, did not know how to read to their children. Because of their low literacy skills, they were reluctant to try on their own. During one of the workshops, the father of a three-year-old girl informed the group he looked over the books to make sure he knew all the words before he read them to her.

Plans for the proposed project were approved by the Prince Albert Literacy Network in May, 1991. Funding for the purchase of books was made by the Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation. Easy books of classic children's literature were purchased and some books were donated.

An introductory session was held with the ABE students to explain the purpose of the workshop, the voluntary nature of the program and the source of sponsorship. It was hoped that a core of students, serious about improving their families' literacy levels, would attend three workshop sessions.

Ten students volunteered to take part. Many of them agreed with the participant who stated, "You see, I was never read to when I was young." Three afternoon sessions were held during regular class time, two weeks apart. Books were read to the students while they followed the text. Difficult vocabulary was explained. Ways in which books could be used to generate discussion were modeled. Students were shown how to encourage participation by their children by asking them to read along, even if they only "read" the pictures and made up their own text. The students were appreciative of learning the "how" of family reading. As one father of three preschoolers told us, "I tried this (reading to my children) last summer and I bought some books for 25 cents at a garage sale. But they just tore them up!"

Three books were read at each workshop session. Each student was given two of the new books to take home to form the nucleus of a family library. Other books were left in the classroom and could be borrowed by the participants for reading at home.

At the final session, students were given an opportunity to learn some Christmas paper crafts using recycled materials. These crafts were suitable for teaching children at home. Many of the students had never been given the opportunity to make decorations before and they seemed truly delighted with the results.

Students were then invited to participate in an evaluation of the workshops. One of the instruments was a checklist. Students seemed unsure of some of the concepts, but all agreed that books could help them and their children learn new things and could provide enjoyment.

Some remarks and requests were:

"I never thought I'd see a story about the Eskimos!" (*A Promise is a Promise* — Munsch)

"Buy *Too Much TV* (Barenstain). Everyone should have that!"

"Do you have any books about the Windigo or Waysaysechak (Aboriginal legends)?"

There was high interest in traditional fairy tales and nursery rhymes from English literature. Laughter and chuckling was heard throughout *The Emperor's New Clothes* (Andersen), followed by discussion of how it reminds us of present-day bureaucrats, hucksters and gullible people.

All students were positive in their remarks concerning the value of the Family Reading Program and the way in which it was presented. They expressed the realization that their inability to read and to write had hampered their full participation in life within a literate society. They did not want their children to suffer in the same fashion.

The ABE Instructor of this class was pleased with the interest and involvement of the students. She felt they certainly would experience the fun of reading, and this would motivate them to improve their reading abilities. However, it was felt that more sessions were needed to capitalize on the interest shown by the students and to give them confidence to start a reading habit in their homes, so necessary for the academic success of children in schools.

Follow-up activities are now being planned to build on the positive experience of the Family Reading Program with these ABE students. Additional workshops will be held and ways explored to make links with the Public Library and the schools the studens' children attend.

Two more Family Reading Programs are part of the 1991-92 project in the Prince Albert community. Three workshops were held in March with fifteen Workplace students in a Canadian Job Strategy program as part of the Life Skills component. The other one involved six peer tutors in the Learning Centre of the Prince Albert Men's Correctional Centre. In this case, an introductory session and five workshops were held. The program was adapted to meet the needs of the participants by packing 10 boxes of books for the Family Visiting Units. Some books were reserved to be given to parents as they rejoined their family upon release. Follow-up is being considered to implement a writing program so that some of the men can "write their own stories" to share with the children of our society.

The Prince Albert Literacy Network has learned that the Family Reading Program is rewarding to the participants and considers it a worthwhile project to continue. In the words of one participant, "I couldn't read to my own children, but I'm going to be a grandparent soon, so I'm practicing to read to my grandchild." Funds will be sought and volunteers are required to work on the committee and train to assist in workshop delivery.

***Lorraine Passler** is a Reading Recovery tutor with the Prince Albert Public Schools and a contract teacher of English as a Second Language for SIAST, Woodland Campus. She is completing her requirements for a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction.*

***Elsie Livingston** is a retired Adult Educator with a Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan. She is currently working as a volunteer in adult literacy projects and organizations as well as other groups in her community.*

In Prince Albert, Saskatchewan —

Wings to Fly

International Year of Literacy Project

By Linda L. Nosbush and Sandra Quayle

> *What is honoured in society will be cultivated there.* — Plato

The heartbeat of early literacy development can be felt in the shared book experience. Successful readers have engaged in extensive shared reading from an early age and they come from print-oriented homes. What do you do when many children come from homes of minimally-literate parents? How do you help parents make their homes more print-oriented when there are no literacy materials presently in the home? How do you support families who live with constant economic and social crisis without increasing stress? We struggled with these questions in our Prince Albert Public School Division and developed our Wings to Fly program to meet the needs of several young readers experiencing difficulty.

Literacy learning requires a support system comprised of the family, the school, the community and the children. Home and school roles are mutually supportive. This does not devalue the need for a sound instructional program within the school, but clearly indicates that we cannot do the job alone. Parents help children believe that they can learn to read. While helping them to see that reading is worthwhile and pleasurable, the parents serve as powerful role models and are able to provide many opportunities for practice. Emerging skills are thus nurtured in a supportive atmosphere.

Our goal in the Wings to Fly project was to enhance familial abilities to create a supportive literacy environment. In order to accomplish this, we reasoned that each child would need a significant partnership with a more experienced reader who would require knowledge and skill beyond that they currently demonstrated. In addition, a way to provide literacy materials in the home had to be devised. We understood that all the key players in the project would need to take ownership of the project and in some way feel connected to one another. Each of these aspects of our project will be described and will be followed by a discussion of the results.

Significant Partner

Young children need a continuous supportive network within which to grow. Key to this network is a person with whom the child can bond over an extended period of time. Since many of the parents of at-risk children were themselves minimally literate, we identified an older sibling within the school (ranging from children who were repeating Grade 1 to students in Grade 9) who could engage in shared book experiences with the child. An entire Grade 1 Transitional class comprised the at-risk group.

Knowledge

Sibling tutors required additional knowledge, skill and an awareness of their own reading processes. Prior to shared reading experiences, the older siblings met for half-hour sessions during which time they developed the skill and knowledge necessary to work with younger children. Even after they began shared reading these sessions were continued. The sessions initially dealt with very basic material such as who holds the books and who sets the direction for the shared reading and advanced to the complexity of encouraging children to use effective strategies.

The reading partners did shared reading for 30 minutes per week at school when both the classroom consultant and the classroom teacher were present to provide assistance. The sibling pairs engaged in shared reading in the home for at least 10 minutes each day.

Literacy Materials

Many children had few, if any, literacy materials in the home. Initially, none of these children knew how to handle and care for books effectively. While we worked on developing these skills and attitudes, we provided reproducible materials that children could take home and make part of their personal collection. In classrooms, children had exposure to a variety of literature and had a number of books that they could share. After Christmas, children were encouraged to take classroom books home. Reproducible books were still sent home for weekend reading so that their personal supply of books in the home would increase. At no time during the project did we lose a book. Children became very responsible and monitored each other's behaviour.

Children were encouraged to reread materials until they had mastered them. There was always time to share old favourites. Repeated reading increased confidence and encouraged fluency, comprehension and sight vocabulary development.

Literacy Celebrations

Five literacy celebrations were held throughout the year; the whole family and other key players were invited to participate. Sibling groups were encouraged to share reading with other family members over refreshments. Pictures were taken during these celebrations and later the younger children wrote captions with the assistance of their teacher. A book was "published" and shared during the next literacy celebration. Before Christmas, money was made available for each child to receive a book (selected by the classroom teacher) and each other sibling received an issue of a periodical (selected by the teacher librarian), presented by our senior administration at the Christmas Literacy Celebration.

continued . . .

Wings to Fly: International Year of Literacy Project *continued*

We always commented on positive behaviours and the development noted in children's literacy learning. At one session, children received book marks, at another paper and pencils, and at the final session a book bag and a community library card. During the fourth and fifth literacy celebrations, parents withdrew for five-minute sessions to discuss creating a supportive environment for writing and reading development.

Ownership

School administration, the Community School Coordinator, Teacher Librarian and Native Student Coordinator for the district were key players in the program in addition to the parents and sibling pairs. To help make the connection between home and school more positive, invitations to each literacy celebration were hand delivered by the Native Student Coordinator. Initially, he met with some resistance until parents understood what we were about and then hands would reach out and say, "I'll have one of those!" indicating parents were beginning to recognize the importance of their role in their children's literacy learning.

Results

As the at-risk children's reading performance increased, the classroom teacher reported increased self-confidence as well as increased ability in tracking print, word recognition, use of phonics and fluency. Interest in books fostered good family relationships centered around shared reading. Many parents began to join the literacy circles in their homes.

Initially, withdrawing older children once a week from their regular program was seen as a problem. However, once teachers witnessed the increased reading capabilities of these children, they found they could work it.

All parents were very supportive of the program and could recognize improvement in both their own and their children's literacy skills. One mother reported that she was going back to school as a result of her participation in this program. All parents felt more confident in supporting their children's learning even if they did not have superior skills themselves.

Conclusion

As we worked with children, parents and fellow professionals, we came to recognize that literacy is a community responsibility; it is the sole arena of no one group. When we work together, we discover children do develop "wings to fly." Although this project concluded in 1990, we have incorporated many aspects of family and community participation in our developmental programs.

***Linda Nosbush** is the Elementary Classroom Consultant, Prince Albert Public Schools and **Sandra Quayle** teaches kindergarten in the morning and assists Linda in the afternoon. This year, the focus has been nurturing literacy in the early years.*

In Pincher Creek, Alberta —

"Partnership Approach to Literacy" project helps school students

By Muriel MacPherson and Kathy Day

Seeing literacy needs as an adult problem only is like shutting the chicken house door after the fox is gone. Every adult who comes to a literacy project for help with reading, writing and/or math knows that school did not work for him or her. There are many different reasons, almost as many as there are requests for help. Adult students often say: "Please help school kids so they won't have to go through what I have gone through."

The community of Pincher Creek and district in southwestern Alberta has a special literacy project for school students. The Partnership Approach to Literacy (PAL) Project began in 1988 in the public school system, which includes two elementary, one K-12 and one junior-senior high school (also a community school). The proposal for PAL was prepared by the literacy coordinator of the local adult literacy project (READ/WRITE) and the community school's further education coordinator. Its purpose is to prevent the growth of literacy problems in school students from grades 1-12.

PAL is a tutoring project designed for students with low reading comprehension skills. It provides one-on-one tutoring encouragement for those school students who do not enjoy reading and who would seldom choose reading as a free-time activity. PAL recognizes that most negative school experiences which result in literacy problems stem from reading problems. PAL's goals are to help students find enjoyment in reading, to help them develop more positive attitudes towards reading in school, to raise their reading levels, and to help them see what strengths they have which will help them become good readers.

Students are referred to PAL by their teachers, parents, or on their own request, and come from all grades. Volunteer tutors from the community take 12 hours of start-up training and are offered inservice training throughout the school year. Training includes an understanding of literacy, learning style strengths related to reading success (the National Reading Styles Institute CARBO Reading Style Inventories are used to provide reading style profiles) and strategies for reading development. Tutors sign a confidentiality code before being matched with a student.

Tutors and students meet once or twice a week (usually during a period chosen by the teacher) in the school library, a quiet area at the back of the classroom, the PAL offices, or after school hours at school or home.

Teachers are closely involved by PAL staff in the selection and monitoring of student/tutor pairs. Inservice training for teachers is also an important part of PAL, including Professional Development Day presentations or after-hours workshops on reading methods and reading style strengths.

Funding came first through the National Literacy Secretariat, Secretary of State, and Alberta Advanced Education in their Literacy Partnerships Program. PAL was a pilot or demonstration project, and was evaluated through research study by Dr. Michael Pollard, University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Education. For the school years 1991-93 it is sponsored by the Pincher Creek School Division, with extra funds through the Wild Rose Foundation and community groups. Budget is $46,000 per school year for a

"Partnership Approach to Literacy" project helps school students *continued*

half-time teacher position, a project administrator, and secretarial help. Each year, the project has matched an average of 36 student-tutor pairs.

Students see the tutors as their "reading pals." Parents see a change in attitude about free reading, and teachers report changed attitudes towards classroom behaviour. All this leads to more positive self-esteem and more successful students.

PAL and READ/WRITE also offer Parent Training workshops for parents of school-age and preschool students to help the parents learn the benefits of shared reading with their children. This school year, a number of high school students have also taken tutor training to do cross-grade tutoring.

For more information about PAL, contact Kathy Day, Project Administrator and Muriel MacPherson, Project Teacher/Trainer at:

Box 1090
Pincher Creek, Alberta T0K 1W0
Telephone: (403) 627-3311 or 627-5711

***Muriel MacPherson** is an English major teacher with a Masters in Curriculum Development and a real concern for the at-risk student. **Kathy Day** is a Science-Home Economics grad who has worked as literacy coordinator since 1985, and has the word "why" imprinted in her research-oriented mind. We operate out of offices in the local schools, and can be reached as follows:*

Muriel: Monday-Friday mornings
Kathy: Monday-Thursday 9-12 a.m. and 1-4 p.m.

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Compiled by Ved Arora, Hilary Craig and Nayda Veeman

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Family literacy resources reviewed

By Norma Klassen

"Laying the Foundations: A Parent-Child Literacy Training Kit"

A publication from PLAN (Push Literacy Action Now, Inc., 1332 G Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003), a nonprofit voluntary literacy program founded in 1972, serving low-literate adults in Washington, D.C.

"Laying the Foundations" was designed for professionals and tutors working with parent-child literacy. It contains a number of components for use as resource material or directly with parent learners. They are:

1. *"Like Parent, Like Child"* is an introductory brochure which:
   - explains the importance of literacy training, parent advocacy and support services and
   - lists clearly ways in which professionals and community organizations can become involved.
2. An eight-section *training guide* covers the following:
   - background insights learned from the lives and views of parents involved, including philosophical issues to consider before using the kit;
   - activities to encourage skill development in young children and developmental danger signs;
   - a curriculum outline, tools and hints for conducting parent workshops;
   - steps in teaching a nonreader to read children's books;
   - writing to be more readable for low-literate parents;
   - pulling the community together to improve family literacy effectiveness;
   - a description of the Take Up Reading Now (TURN) projects at PLAN, and ideas for creating learning kits and;
   - a list of family literacy resources, updated in 1990.
3. *"Reading and Learning Tips for Parents"* is an easy-to-read brochure designed to be used as a handout for parents in a family literacy workshop or as a reading exercise in an adult literacy class.
4. *"Read to Me"* is an audio cassette tape made by parents and children from the PLAN project. It stresses the importance of reading to children from infancy to prepare them for reading on their own. It has children and parents reading nursery rhymes and songs together.
5. *"All About Me"* is a model of a personal book, homemade with parents and children. It is designed to have personal meaning for the child and to encourage positive feelings toward reading.

As a relative newcomer to the Family Literacy movement, I found "Laying the Foundations" to be an excellent resource. It is designed to facilitate ease of use. The involvement of low-literate parents in the kit's development guards against "deficit-view assumptions about what parents who can't read can or cannot do for their children." "Laying the Foundations" is amazingly comprehensive for one kit. It gives enough information on its own for an educator to begin work with a parent group.

continued . . .

Family literacy resources reviewed *continued*

"From the Crib to the Classroom"

A 12 minute video by Literacy Program, PLAN Inc., Washington, D.C., 1990

"From the Crib to the Classroom" demonstrates the importance of parents as their children's first and most influential teachers. A parent learner narrates the video in an informal, straightforward and personal manner. Showing a variety of happy parent-child interactions, the narrator discusses the crucial learning that is happening in each situation. Skills learned during play are clearly shown as necessary prerequisites to school work. Reasons for reading to children from infancy are emphasized. Suggestions are given for supporting children in homework and for making use of community resources. The narrator stresses the correlation between the ease of learning and feelings of happiness and security. As an encouragement to parents, she suggests, "We do the best we can. I'm sure you do too."

Note: Students in an Adult Basic Education classroom were asked to critique this video. Their reactions, for the most part, were very positive. They all said they learned from the video, and that it should be shown to all parents. One student admitted she found the video very painful to watch because it reminded her of what she had missed as a child. Consequently, the thought of reading to her own children was extremely uncomfortable, even though her reading skills were adequate. This student went through a significant grieving process over her own loss as a child before she was able to comfortably read to her children. This incident reminded me of the importance for facilitators to be aware and supportive of the dynamics involved in change, especially when breaking intergenerational cycles.

"Family Literacy in Action: A Survey of Successful Programs"

New Readers Press, New York, 1990, ISBN-0-88336-575-8

This little booklet describes eight family literacy programs in the U.S. They were chosen by editor M. Conlan McIvor, after two years of research to find innovative programs that would be "representative of the richness and diversity of family literacy programs" and that "could serve as an inspiration and an example to others." For each project, the booklet gives information on clientele and need, project beginnings, funding sources, recruitment and training, format and components, and a summary of results. The booklet would be of interest to people wanting to design or evaluate family literacy programs. A similar booklet describing Canadian programs would certainly be useful here.

"Facilitator's Handbook for a Family Literacy Program'

By Christine Camilleri, Frontier College Press, 35 Jackes Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1E2 (1990)

This short handbook provides a framework for anyone wishing to assist parents who want to read to children. It contains a statement of purpose and goals for a family literacy program, a typical session outline, ideas for group activities, rationale for the workshop process, the role of the facilitator, reading tips for parents, tips for sharing books with babies, and needs assessment and evaluation sheets.

"Breaking the Cycle"

A 1/2 inch VHS, 14 minutes by the Kentucky Department of Education, available from the National Centre for Family Literacy, 401 South 4th Avenue, Suite 610, Louisville, Kentucky 40202.

This video describes the Kenan Family Literacy Project in Kentucky, designed to help break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty in low-literate families. The project combines adult basic education and early childhood education in the same location. At the start of a typical day, parents work on basic skills and employment preparation while children are in preschool. Parents then join their children for learning activities under the direction of an early childhood specialist. This is referred to as "Parent As Teacher Time." After eating lunch together, children rejoin preschool activities, and parents study or do in-house work experience. The day ends with parent discussion groups centered on parenting skills.

This video would be of some benefit to people wishing to start family literacy programs. Parent learners give insight as to their feelings about reentering an educational setting and their learning through the Kenan Project. Staff members talk about the goals and accomplishments of the project. What is missing is a balance in the portrayal of gender, ethnic groups and power. At least half of the parent learners, but none of the staff, were of a visible ethnic minority. The only men shown in the video were the principal of the school and a husband who talked only about his spouse and child's learning. No mention was made that he also had something to learn. Also, no mention was made of the learning staff must have gained from the parents. It would seem to me that "breaking the low-literacy cycle" involves an issue of re distribution of power and that a video made to show a "model" project *should* also "model" this distribution of power by showing staff as learners, men as learners, and visible minority groups as staff.

*According to the booklet, "Family Literacy in Action," fathers are involved as parent learners. This booklet gives more factual details than the video about the Kenan Project.

"Story Time"

A 5 minute VHS available from Adult Education Services, Eastern Townships School Board, 2365 Galt Street West, Sherbrooke, Quebec J1K 1L1 (1990).

"Story Time" is a short video of adults comfortably reading to children, showing a variety of situations, ages, ethnic groups, reading styles and reading abilities. The video has no commentary, only the sound of reading voices as one story line is followed. "Story Time" could

continued . . .

Family literacy resources reviewed *continued*

be used effectively in family literacy groups to demonstrate that there are many "right" ways to read to children, and that fluency is not necessary for children and parents to benefit from reading together.

The "National Centre for Family Literacy" offers a monthly newsletter which gives information on literacy projects, conferences, grants, training and publications. It also contains articles and editorials on family literacy issues. December, 1991, Volume 3, Issue 3, contained two articles which caught my attention.

"Family Literacy and the Nations' Goals for Education" by Sharon Darling suggested that the nation's past solution for dealing with children at risk, that of putting children into educational institutions younger and younger, will not work. She suggested that it sends the wrong message to parents bout the value we place on their ability to be their children's most influential teachers. The message that only teachers should teach, perpetuates the feeling of low self-esteem of the parents.

Another article, "Education for Change" by Ted Boweman, emphasized the necessity for those of us working with families to be aware of the dynamics of change. First of all, we must respect people's ability to share in or control decision making. Then we must appreciate some of the barriers to change: fear of what is lost in making the change, actual or perceived loss of control or power, fear of not achieving one's hope, fear of still more demands on an already hectic life, the difficulty of changing a point of view and range of vision. Acknowledgement of what change requires should be a first step in family literacy programs.

Norma Klassen *has worked in Adult Basic Education for over ten years. She is the mother of two preschool children, and is interested in family literacy on both a professional and a personal basis.*

COMING UP IN *Literacy Works*

The summer issue of *Literacy Works* will focus on teaching and learning resources for practitioners and learners. Deadline for submissions is May 15.

Issues in the works for 1992-93 include:

- Literacy and Learning Disabilities
- Literacy and New Canadians

If you would like to contribute ideas or articles for any of these issues, if you have ideas for themes for other issues, or if you are interested in taking part in our editorial committee, please feel free to contact the Saskatchewan Literacy Network office in Saskatoon, or call the editor, Liz Ormiston at 757-7236 in Regina.

Robin Stonehouse receives Canadian Literacy Service Award

Left to right: Robin Stonehouse, winner of award, is congratulated by Royal Bourk, president of the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) while Elsie Livingston, Saskatchewan representative to MCL, looks on.

Meeting the needs of about 6.8 million adult Canadians who wish to advance their skills in literacy and basic education requires accessible programs and caring people. To encourage leadership, the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) offers a yearly award. Last year, the Regina Public Library was the recipient, and this year Robin Stonehouse, adult educator at SIAST, Kelsey Campus, was chosen by MCL to receive the Canadian Literacy Service Award.

Robin's unique qualities of leadership have guided the Saskatoon Literacy Coalition, the Movement for Canadian Literacy for which he served as President, and adult learners as they have organized locally, provincially and nationally.

Recognizing the strength in a shared voice from learners and those who teach them, a national group, Learner's Action Group of Canada (LAGOC) was formed during International Literacy Year, 1990. Alan Kobe of Saskatoon is Chairperson of the LAGOC.

Robin guided the Saskatchewan Literacy Council as co-chairperson from 1989 to 1991 as it sought to spread awareness and initiate innovative projects in literacy. The Council served in an advisory capacity to the Department of Education to ensure a greater access to adult students across the province.

MCL President, Royal Bourk of Saskatoon, made the presentation of the Canadian Literacy Service Award to Robin Stonehouse at the Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association Conference held recently in Saskatoon for 250 educators from across the province.

Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) Link

By Elsie Livingston

Moving On

At the February Board Meeting the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) affirmed that the movement is moving on! MCL continues to take the issues of Adult Literacy and Basic Education seriously. We are the national literacy lobbying and advocacy network in Canada.

MCL

- brings together people with similar concerns and convictions about adult literacy.
- influences the public through consultation with other national groups.
- supports the strategy of a shared voice with learners.
- offers a comprehensive body of knowledge about adult literacy issues to government officials in charge of adult literacy and basic education.

At the Annual Meeting of MCL, held in Ottawa in February, Saskatchewan was well represented. Ved Arora attended for the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, and Alan Kobe, chairperson of the Learner Action Group of Canada, was elected to the Board of Directors. Royal Bourk, nominated by the Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association, became president of MCL for the next two years. I will continue as Provincial Representative until 1993.

The highlight of the Annual Meeting is the presentation of the Canadian Literacy Service Award. It was very exciting to learn that Robin Stonehouse was this year's recipient. Robin's respect for the gifts of learners, his knowledge so generously shared, and his skills of leadership were suitably recognized in the presentation.

All those who support adult literacy in our province are invited to join MCL as a tangible expression of their support for the efforts of the people giving leadership. Send $15 ($40 includes four issues of the Journal), or get a staff membership for $60, to:

Movement for Canadian Literacy
500 – 880 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1R 6K7

__Elsie Livingston__ is Saskatchewan Representative to the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL).

CALL FOR DONATIONS

The Network needs YOUR help to continue offering these services:

What's News Monthly Flyer	
Annual cost per individual	$ 10
On Our Way Plain English Newspaper	
Production and distribution cost for one (1) annual subscription	$ 40
Actual cost of one (1) annual classroom subscription	$ 400
Literacy Works Quarterly Journal	
Actual cost per yearly subscription	$ 50
New Writers' Publications	
Cost to publish three (3) volumes	$6000
Office Equipment	
Cost of modems to connect Saskatoon and Prince Albert computers to each other and to National Database	$ 300
Portable display hardware	$1000

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations of $10 and over.
Any **and all contributions appreciated!**

Send donations to:
Saskatchewan Literacy Network
P.O. Box 1520
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5
Phone (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178
Fax (306) 933-6490

SABEA Conference deals with roots of adult education crisis

By Rick Hesch

The following is a formal evaluation of the 1992 Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association (SABEA) conference, held in Saskatoon, February 26-28, 1992. The paper is intended as a reflection on events which emerged from, and during, the conference. References to the Adult Upgrading Report are not intended to represent a complete analysis of it. Rather, they are intended to draw attention to some contents and recommendations which the events of the conference suggest may be of concern to provincial adult educators.

The SABEA conference was unlike any professional development conference I've been at in my 20 years of on-again off-again teaching. For the first time in my experience, teachers were consistently and rigourously faced with an explicit or implicit politicized critique of existing and past practices. At the same time, we were affirming our selves in cultural ways.

Professional conferences are generally taken as opportunities to brush up on the most recent tricks of the trade. This conference was about political, cultural, and social literacy. Our brushing up was not about tricks of the trade, but about the nature, underlying character, and some solutions to the crisis that SABEA president Donna Phillips referred to in her opening remarks.

The just released Adult Upgrading Report (Saskatchewan Education, 1992) repeats the same dominant paradigms about literacy that Donna referred to as "obsolete." Those dominant paradigms, with reference to upgrading and opportunity, as well as schooling in general, have been technical rationality and individualism. This view does not encourage the kind of collective informal cultural exchange which occurred at the conference.

Formal education is a site of cultural struggle, an ongoing contest over the questions of whose culture gets included in the curriculum, and in what ways. The practice of teaching can be seen as a kind of cultural work akin to the work of producing different forms of music, art or magic. For teachers, whether we choose to have classroom culture which facilitates cultural exchange between our students as a learning opportunity, or promote abstract individualism through competency-based education, is crucial.

The theme of Lily Stonehouse's presentation was that we are in a period of transformation. She referred to the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the "rhetoric of equal opportunities." One example of transformation for adult educators is losing a position as a teacher of trades and transforming into an Adult Basic Education (ABE) instructor, without sufficient training for the new work.

Terry Wotherspoon spoke of how the dominant educational paradigm continues to blame the students themselves for a perceived crisis in education. He claimed that a common characteristic of the language of the dominant interest is to pose education as neutral. He spoke of four major strategies currently being employed in the restructuring and reorganization of education: greater centralization; downsizing of the educational apparatus; general fiscal restraint; and privatization, especially for those with

continued . . .

SABEA Conference deals with roots of adult education crisis *continued*

greater education. He also said that schools are designed to help shape the subjectivity of students. Each of these strategies has been employed in the drafting of the Adult Upgrading Report.

Brian Staples claimed that there are two contrasting paradigms in education: education that is about automobiles, or the training of workers for efficient and profitable economic production in a capitalist economy; and education for people who aim to lead their lives as fully and thoughtfully as possible. Staples called for schooling that is not divorced from real life and school as a happiness-generator. He argued that "we cannot solve the problem of adult literacy with volunteers." He argued that schools must transform from serving 20 percent of the population 20 percent of the time to serving 100 percent of the population 100 percent of the time.

George Martell said that adult educators bring to their work an assumption about the dignity of their students and the social class they come from that he does not not recognize elsewhere. He supported the deepening of democracy in education, not only for students, through classroom practice, but also in the public realm, for adult educators. He called for taking back the "language of excellence" from the conservatives in education.

As important as the contribution of outside resource people, the small group meetings at the conference were even more important. One of the strengths of the conference was the blending of outside knowledge and theory, through resource people, and the practical knowledge of conference participants.

Another exciting development at the conference was the recognition of a need for greater cooperation between agencies with an interest in adult education. Plans for future interagency discussions were made and a preliminary planning meeting will be held on March 13.

The conference was attended by representatives of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation who were very pleased to have been invited. SABEA members also remarked that they were very glad to see the STF represented. Perhaps the chasm between the K-12 system and adult education will finally be bridged.

***Rick Hesch** is a sessional lecturer in the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, a member of the editorial collective for "Our Schools/Our Selves," and a member of CUPE Local 3287. Rick is a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.*

***Editor's Note:** Because of space limitations, this report has undergone extensive editing. Readers who are interested in receiving a copy of the full report are invited to contact the Saskatchewan Literacy Network (306) 653-7368.*

NETWORK NEWS — Spring, 1992

1. **Board News**

The board welcomes two new board members:

- Cecile Shatilla, representing the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan. Cecile is the Executive Director of Buffalo Narrows Friendship Centre.
- Larry Innes, the Saskatchewan representative to the Learners Action Group of Canada. Larry has been appointed to fill a board vacancy until the next Annual General Meeting.

In an effort to reduce expenses, the board decided to move to bi-monthly meetings. The executive committee will meet between regular board meetings. The next board meeting will be April 4 at which time new project proposals will be considered. If you have ideas about what you would like the Network to be doing, please contact the office.

The board will be directing its energies towards fundraising over the next few months. In particular, the Network is seeking funds to continue the publication of "On Our Way." Current funding will run out in July.

Another concern for the board is the increasing demand on the Network office for information and referral. Unfortunately, the Network does not receive operation funding to provide this service as it is completely dependent on project funding.

2. **Student/learner support**

The committee is planning a conference for learners to be held October 16–18 at Camp Rayner. The conference will focus on developing leadership skills to help participants in organizing support groups in their regions. Each region will be invited to choose three representatives to attend the conference.

3. **Practitioners committee**

The committee committee met in January and developed a list of concerns which are common to adult educators. The Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education conference held an interagency workshop on February 27 (see article, page 29).

An invitation is extended to interested practitioners to join this very important committee. Meetings are held in Saskatoon or are conducted by teleconference.

The committee has recommended that the summer issue of *Literacy Works* be a special resources issue. This idea is based on the Fall 1991 edition of the B.C. Literacy Bulletin, parts of which will be reproduced in our summer issue. This will be an important opportunity for practitioners to share information about their favourite resources in time for the purchase of materials for fall programs.

4. **Family literacy**

There is growing interest in family literacy. The results of the Mayfair Literacy Project will be highlighted at the Saskatchewan Reading Council conference on May 8 in Regina. Workshops on "How to Read to your Kids" have been held for ABE students in Prince Albert and for men in the Provincial Correctional Centre. The response has been very positive and we look forward to further workshops for ABE students throughout the province.

A "Family Literacy Camp" for new Canadians is being planned in Regina this summer. Watch for more details in the next issue.

In North Battleford, "Born to Read" kits will be distributed to new mothers in the hospital.

5. **Publications**

"Struggle and Growth" — the remaining three volumes of the New Writers publications are nearly ready to go to print. We are now looking for donors for the printing costs which are estimated at $2,100 per volume.

6. **Office news**

The Network has agreed to be the Saskatchewan contact for the National Adult Literacy Database and has just received an iNet account. The next task for office staff will be to learn this new technology.

We are also able to send faxes directly from our office now. This means that the 653-7368 number may be busy with electronic communications. Please be patient.

7. **Thank you.** The Saskatchewan Literacy Network is grateful for a recent donation in memory of **Robert McLellan**.

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

1. **The Committee to Promote Literacy**

Joan Berntson, Committee Chairperson reports that the 1991 Gowski Golf Tournament and Literacy Awards Dinner raised over $85,000. The funds were allocated as follows:

- Carlton Trail Regional College — $35,000 to purchase a PALS Lab
- READ Saskatoon — $25,000 for various projects
- Circle Project, Regina — $10,000
- Heartland Motion Pictures — $10,000 to produce a motion picture on literacy in prisons

The remaining funds will be turned over to the Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation.

The 1992 Golf Tournament and Literacy Awards Dinner will be held in Regina. Watch the next issue of *Literacy Works* for details on these events and information on how to submit nominations for 1992.

2. **Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation**

The Foundation held its first meeting of 1992 on January 20 in Regina. Dennis Ball was elected chairperson. The Foundation and the Committee to Promote Literacy will be working together this year.

3. **Partnerships project**

Susan McNabb of Regina has been contracted to compile a report on the National Literacy Secretariat projects carried out in Saskatchewan from 1988 to 1991. This report should be published in the near future.

4. **Upcoming conferences**

The Saskatchewan Association for Lifelong Learning (SALL) will hold a conference entitled "Adult Education in a Learning Society," April 29 and 30 in Saskatoon. For information contact Glen Hass in Saskatoon at 966-5550

"Soaring Into Literacy" is the title of the 23rd Annual Saskatchewan Reading Conference, to be held May 7 to 9 at the Ramada Renaissance in Regina. For more information contact: Dawn Kesslering, 2406 Crowe Bay East, Regina, Sask. S4V 0V7, telephone 761-0641.

"Breaking the Barriers: Equity and Access in Adult Education," the 1992 Canadian Association for Adult Education Conference, will be held June 17 to 20 in Regina. For information call 787-4281.

Hilary Craig, one of the key volunteers on our *Literacy Works* newsletter committee, is recovering from recent surgery. We miss you, Hilary, and wish you all the best in your recovery!

Join *Literacy Works* in compiling

A comprehensive guide to relevant materials for literacy practitioners and learners

Our upcoming summer issue will be made up almost entirely of a listing and description of useful classroom materials: books, video and audio tapes, games and kits. We're asking for your help. Thanks to the B.C. Literacy Bulletin for inspiring the idea, and for providing a model for this form.

Please fill out the following and send it to us by May 15.

Recommended Literacy Materials Review

Title

Author

Publisher Copyright Date

Where is it available?

Reading level: ☐ Basic (Grade 0-3) ☐ Functional (Grade 4-6) ☐ Independent (Grade 7-9)

1. Describe the material
2. How do you use it?
3. Why does it work with learners?
4. What are the weaknesses, if any?

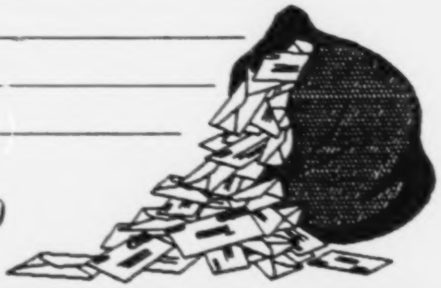
If reviewing print material, please attach a photocopy of the table of contents and a sample page of the text, and feel free to elaborate on any aspect of the material.

Recommended by

Address

City Phone

Organization (if any)



Submissions should be sent to:

Liz Ormiston, Editor, *Literacy Works*
2349 Robinson Street, Regina, SK S4T 2R3

Compliments of
Sask. Literacy Network

LITERACY W•O•R•K•S

Vol. 3, No. 4 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network Summer 1992

SPECIAL ISSUE: literacy resources

Price: $5.00 for non-members (includes tax)

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without permission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236.

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Back issues of Literacy Works available

The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for $5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network:

Vol. 1, No. 2	Computers and Literacy
Vol. 1, No. 4	Aboriginal Literacy
Vol. 2, No. 1	Literacy and Health
Vol. 2, No. 2	Focus on the Learner
Vol. 3, No. 2	Plain Language
Vol. 3, No. 3	Family Literacy

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Resource Reviews

The following reviews are from the Fall 1991 and Spring 1992 issues of the Literacy Materials Bulletin *of British Columbia. Thanks to the committee which publishes the* Bulletin *for permission to reprint. For more information on the* Literacy Materials Bulletin *contact: Laurie Gould, chairperson, Literacy Materials Committee, Basic Education Department, Vancouver Community College (KEC), 1155 East Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia V5T 4N3*

Helping You Bank

Publisher:	*The Canadian Banker's Association, 1989*
Available:	*Box 348, Suite, 600, 2 First Canadian Place, Toronto, Ontario M5X 1E1*
Price:	*Free*
Reviewed by:	***Barbara Bate***
Level:	*Functional (Grades 4-6)*

Helping You Bank teaches adults about bank accounts. Topics covered include: how to choose a bank account, how to open a bank account, how to use a bank account, how to make the most of a bank account, interest, and the automated banking machine. In addition, there are sections on banking terms, other banking services, and the chartered banks of Canada.

The book is Canadian-produced. Its friendly cover and good use of graphics and colour make it attractive to learners. Large print on plenty of white background is an additional bonus.

It is suggested that instructors/tutors work through the book with learners since each section is quite detailed and the vocabulary can be challenging. The book received favourable reports from both literacy and ESL instructors. They recommend asking learners to bring in forms from their respective banks, so that each adult becomes comfortable with the procedure at his or her bank.

Another suggestion is to invite bank or credit union personnel to visit the class and talk about banking or to take the class to visit a bank or credit union. In either case, the practical applications of this resource are invaluable.

It's Your Right!

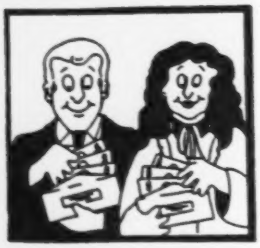
Authors:	*Jim Bell and Marjatta Holt*
Available:	*Human Rights Directorate, Department of Secretary of State, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M5*
Price:	*Free*
Reviewed by:	***Laurie Gould***
Level:	*Basic, Functional and Independent*

It's Your Right! focuses on those human rights issues that affect the lives of many adult students: employment rights, tenant rights, age, sexual harassment, equal pay, disability, basic rights and freedoms, as well discrimination based on race, colour, and ethnic origin. These materials were designed for use in Canadian Adult Basic Education classes.

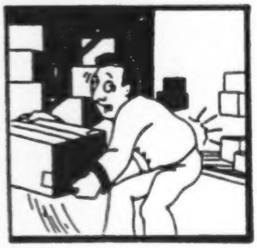
The student book consists of eight modules that explore each of these issues in depth. The modules are packaged together in an attractive spiral-bound notebook. Careful attention has been given to format, size of print, and white space. The reading level is fairly easy, but the way relevant issues are dealt with on different levels of abstraction makes the book useful for a range of abilities.

A separate teachers' guide has background information on human rights issues and legislation, worthwhile suggestions for use, and some helpful ideas on how to handle sensitive issues in ABE classes.

Instructors and students say *It's Your Right!* is interesting, informative, true to life, and well laid out. Instructors report that the topics generate exciting discussion. Students say they enjoy the interesting variety of materials and exercises. These include letters to newspapers, friends, and employers; statements to and from the Human Rights Commission; an accident report; WCB forms; and crossword puzzles. Although *It's Your Right!* has been used successfully in on-to-one situations, it seems to work best in groups where students can share their experiences and ideas. It is a particularly useful resource to have on hand when one of these human rights issues comes up in class.



Equal Pay



Disability

Let's Work Safely!

Author:	*Linda Mrowicki*
Publisher:	*Monarch Books*
Available:	*Monarch Books Ltd.,* *5000 Dufferin Street,* *Downsview, Ontario M3H 5T5.* *Telephone (416) 663-8231* *Fax (416) 736-1702*
Price:	*$11.95*
Reviewed by:	***Joan Acosta***
Level:	*Functional (4-6)*

Let's Work Safely!, subtitled *English Language Skills for Safety in the Workplace*, introduces safety concepts as well as the language skills necessary to function safely in the workplace.

The chapters cover proper safety clothing, safety procedures (how to lift and move heavy objects), unsafe working conditions (poor lighting or handling flammable materials), and how to handle accidents. The book gives new workers the language they need to accept safety directions gracefully, clarify directions, complain about unsafe conditions politely yet forcefully, and to insist on getting the safety equipment they need. The pictures allow students the opportunity to recognize unsafe conditions, and the dialogues give them the language they need to insist on safe working conditions.

The book is intended for adult ESL students, but many learners can benefit from the study of generic safety concepts and safety language.

The book was field tested in a number of classes. It was tested in two bridge classes and in a class of mentally handicapped adults reading at a Grade 2-3 level. Students seemed interested in the material and teachers liked "the use of illustrations" and "the simple, straightforward comprehension questions."

All the teachers who tested the book said they felt the text became too difficult by the end of the book. Also it was noted that teachers would need to ensure that the safety content accurately reflects the safety rules and practices in the students' workplaces.

There is a slim, spiral-bound Teacher's Book with answers as well as some suggestions for role play and follow-up. It was not field tested for this review.

How Two-Feather Was Saved from Loneliness

Author:	*C.J. Taylor*
Publisher:	*Tundra Books*
Available:	*Bookstores*
Price:	*$12.95*
Recommended by:	*Lorraine Fox*
Reviewed by:	***Loraine Wong***
Level:	*Functional (4-6)*

The Abenaki legend of the first gifts of fire and corn is retold here as a poignant love story, wonderfully illustrated with colourful paintings. C.J. Taylor has woven a story of love and magic, recounting Two-Feather's loneliness and first meeting with the Corn Goddess. As his love for the Goddess grows, Two-Feather follows her on a long journey. Unable to stay with Two-Feather, the Goddess creates fire and corn as a gift to him, making communal life easier, and so saving Two-Feather from loneliness.

The story is told in simple, descriptive language with effective use of direct speech. The illustrations are bright and striking and add a richness to the book.

The book may at first appear to be a child's book. One student did report that he felt offended by being given a "kid's book". An introduction or explanation of legends and storytelling might offset this reaction.

Most students in both native and non-native centres enjoyed the book. One class even discussed why Two-Feather was not used as a plural.

Other comments included:

- It's short and easy to read, and I really liked the pictures.
- Because the story is short, you could remember it and tell it when in circle or at sweat.
- Good pictures to emphasize the growing season.
- I liked reading about the author. It's important that the author is native.

Enwhisteetkwa

Author: *Jeanette C. Armstrong*
Publisher: *Okanagan Indian Curriculum Project, 1988*
Available: *Theytis Books, P.O. Box 218, Penticton, B.C. V2A 5P9*
Price: *$5.95*
Reviewed by: ***Lorraine Fox***
Level: *Functional (4-6), Independent (7-9)*

Enwhisteetkwa has a glossy cover with the author's biography on the back and an illustration on the front incorporating the colours of the four directions. These colours — red, yellow, black and white — are intrinsic to many native cultures. The author is also responsible for inside illustrations.

The story is told to us by a young Okanagan girl named Enwhisteetkwa. We learn about the traditions of the Okanagan people and follow their daily lives with the unfolding of each of the four seasons.

Their activities include food gathering and preparation, crafting and repair of household items, delighting in and respecting nature, and observing the traditional ceremonies and legends of the Okanagan people.

This material could be used as a component of native studies, as a theme unit (native cultures of B.C.) or as reading material. It works with native learners because it was written by an Okanagan native woman who is able to bring us a genuine picture of the traditional life of her culture. As well, the language is at a level that is easily understood by accomplished readers and would be suitable for new learners, if assisted.

It is enjoyable to non-native readers as it offers a look into a lifestyle that is often mysterious and it does this in plain language.

> The song was soft. It reminded me of wind through pine trees. I listened as I watched my grandmother's fingers flying in and out of the hemp and tule bag she was weaving. They were like little brown birds. The fire was crackling and curling light and smoke pictures everywhere. I was warm and dream hearing. My grandmother's soft voice was singing to me of Ska-Loo-La, the wicked owl woman waiting to catch bad little girls. She wanted me to be good and clean and respectful so Ska-Loo-La wouldn't get me.
>
> From *Enwhisteetkwa*

The learners who used this book did not express any weaknesses and felt it to be an excellent example of written native material.

My Name is Louis

Author:	Janet Craig James
Publisher:	Penumbra Press, 1990
Available:	Bookstores
Price:	$9.95
Reviewed by:	**Basha Rahn**
Level:	Independent (7-9)

My Name is Louis begins as a story about the anger of a native Indian youth against local land development in his small northern Ontario community. In a landscape ruined by intruders, Louis is also suffering a troubled relationship with his father and the poor health of his mother. With his neighbour, who was at first the enemy, Louis learns to share his private passion for drawing and painting. This friendship leads to possibilities for moving to the city to pursue his career and gain respect as a man and as an artist. Louis has difficult choices to make.

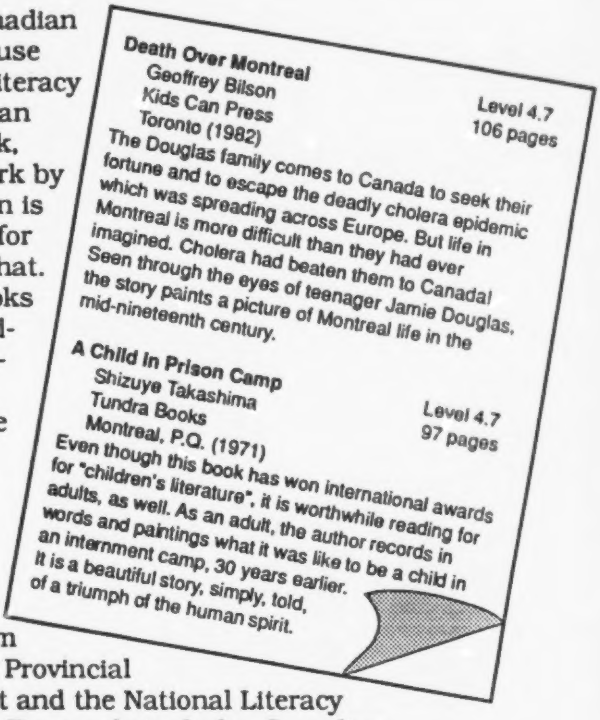
This book is beautifully written for readers at an independent level. Some readers thought it was an accurate portrayal of the turbulence of adolescent years. One reader expected violence between natives and non-natives to develop at any moment and when it didn't, he felt the approach was positive. The ending is not a pat, happy one and it leaves questions for thought and discussion. The themes are topical and the book can be used as part of an English curriculum or with native studies. However, the language is difficult for new readers.

Chapter head lettering by Lionel LeMoine Fitzgerald and the watercolour cover art by Judy Pennanen contribute to the appeal of this book.

RECLAIM Bibliography of Canadian High Interest, Low-Level Novels for Adults, 1990 edition

Author:	Rosalie Bean
Available:	RECLAIM, 3449 University Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2AB
Price:	Free
Reviewed by:	**Thomas Quigley**
Level:	(1-4), (4-8)

Finding Canadian material to use with adult literacy students is an ongoing task, and this work by Rosalie Bean is very useful for doing just that. The two books are the product of a project sponsored by the Reading Council for Literacy Advance (RECLAIM) with joint funding from the Quebec Provincial Government and the National Literacy Secretariat. Bean only includes Canadian-produced reading material in the form of novels, short story collections, self-help guides, poetry or plays. Books that focus on, or include, skill-building exercises are not listed. All texts were rated for readability using the Gunning-Fox Readability Index.



Death Over Montreal
Geoffrey Bilson
Kids Can Press
Toronto (1982)

Level 4.7
106 pages

The Douglas family comes to Canada to seek their fortune and to escape the deadly cholera epidemic which was spreading across Europe. But life in Montreal is more difficult than they had ever imagined. Cholera had beaten them to Canada! Seen through the eyes of teenager Jamie Douglas, the story paints a picture of Montreal life in the mid-nineteenth century.

A Child in Prison Camp
Shizuye Takashima
Tundra Books
Montreal, P.Q. (1971)

Level 4.7
97 pages

Even though this book has won international awards for "children's literature", it is worthwhile reading for adults, as well. As an adult, the author records in words and paintings what it was like to be a child in an internment camp, 30 years earlier. It is a beautiful story, simply, told, of a triumph of the human spirit.

Each volume is arranged by reading level; the second volume actually starts at 4.4, not 4. The first volume has 79 entries; the second, 65. All entries include author/title and publishing information, level, length, and an annotation. The annotation gives a summary of the book's content, and includes comments on format, and the presence of illustrations and vocabulary/new words aids. There is no indication of availability. At the back of each volume there is a list of the publishers' addresses cited in the particular volume: 17 in volume 1; 24 in volume 2. There are only eight publishers listed in both volumes. The majority of the material included is student writing published by local community literacy councils or programs. There are only a few items from commercial publishers. While some titles will be only of local interest, others will appeal to students anywhere in Canada. There is a good mix of collections and individual authors. Most material listed was published in the mid-1980's, but the second volume has a strong selection of items published in the 1970's.

The Spirit of Vocabulary (Canada)

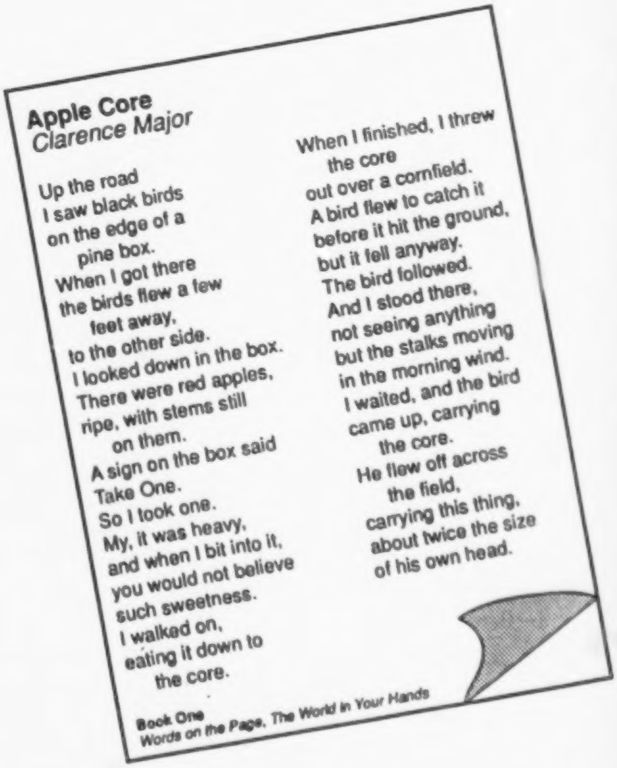
Authors: *Ken and Cecile Weber*
Publisher: *Globe/Modern Curriculum Press, 1991*
Available: *Globe/Modern, 3771 Victoria Park Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1W 2P9*
Telephone: 1-800-263-4005
Price: ***$11.95***
Reviewed by: ***Andrew Kennedy***
Level: *Functional/Independent*
ISBN *0-88996-228-6*

The Spirit of Vocabulary (Canada) is the first of six books in *The Vocabulary of Canada* series. This workbook presents 21 stories on past and present Canadian personalities and events. Each story includes photographs and several pages of exercises. The stories are written in a journalistic style with simple sentence structure at a Grade 7 level.

The exercise pages are typical of reading workbooks and use various activities to test comprehension, build vocabulary and practise writing. A teacher's manual and answer key are available.

The Spirit of Vocabulary (Canada) is an attractively-presented vocabulary and reading book. Students liked the look of the book, the contemporary content, and the exercises. They found the material challenging as well as informative, educational, and stimulating. The use of repetition in the exercises increased student learning. Some students liked the pronunciations of highlighted words provided with each story. The most appealing feature for students was the Canadian content.

The reading skills required may limit the use in beginning literacy classes. The book could be used as an independent workbook, as an instructional tool on a on-to-one basis or as a class resource for readings and topical discussions.



Apple Core
Clarence Major

Up the road
I saw black birds
on the edge of a
pine box.
When I got there
the birds flew a few
feet away,
to the other side.
I looked down in the box.
There were red apples,
ripe, with stems still
on them.
A sign on the box said
Take One.
So I took one.
My, it was heavy,
and when I bit into it,
you would not believe
such sweetness.
I walked on,
eating it down to
the core.

When I finished, I threw
the core
out over a cornfield.
A bird flew to catch it
before it hit the ground,
but it fell anyway.
The bird followed.
And I stood there,
not seeing anything
but the stalks moving
in the morning wind.
I waited, and the bird
came up, carrying
the core.
He flew off across
the field,
carrying this thing,
about twice the size
of his own head.

Book One
Words on the Page, The World in Your Hands

from the Literacy Materials Bulletin of B.C.

Words on the Page, the World in Your Hand

Edited by: Catherine Lipkin and Virginia Solotaroff
Publisher: Perennial Library, Harper & Row, New York, 1990
Available: Bookstores or 1-800-387-0117
Price: $9.50
Reviewed by: **Loraine Wong**
Level: Functional/Independent
ISBN 0-06-096368-9

Words On the Page is a collection of prose and poetry for adult new readers. The editors noted a lack of meaningful and stimulating material available for adult beginning readers in their programs. Attempts at writing their own material were unsuccessful, so the editors contacted several hundred professional writers for help. The results were encouraging, and writers responded with new or adapted material that was suitable for literacy students.

The material is published in three volumes, with a complimentary teaching manual available. Each book has a good selection of poetry and prose from a variety of sources. Although there are no graphics, the selections are well laid out with lots of white space.

At first, students may need to be shown that the books are anthologies, and not one long story. A student in one program was reluctant to use the book, as he thought he would have to read the "whole book." Classes that field tested the books found that the subjects covered (e.g., parenting, aging, even creation stories), provoked a lot of discussion. Students enjoyed the variety of writing styles, and appreciated having adult material that was not stilted and over simplified.

There is a range of reading levels in the books, so most students can find a suitable selection. While these books might not be part of an entire curriculum, they certainly would be a valuable addition to a class library.

Not Only Me

Author: Paul Kropp
Publisher: Collier Macmillan Canada, 1987
Available: Maxwell MacMillan, 539 Collier MacMillan Drive, Cambridge, Ontario N1R 5W9
Telephone: 1-800-465-5273
Price: $5.95
Reviewed by: **Laurie Gould**
Level: Functional
ISBN 02-953500-X

Not Only Me is a novel that deals with the difficult subject of child sexual abuse. It tells the story of Lynn, a young woman who has left home. Lynn's nine-year-old sister, Chrissie, keeps phoning and begging her to come back. Chrissie finally discloses what Lynn has at some level known all along — their step-father is a child abuser. Lynn must now acknowledge her own pain and help her family deal with this crisis.

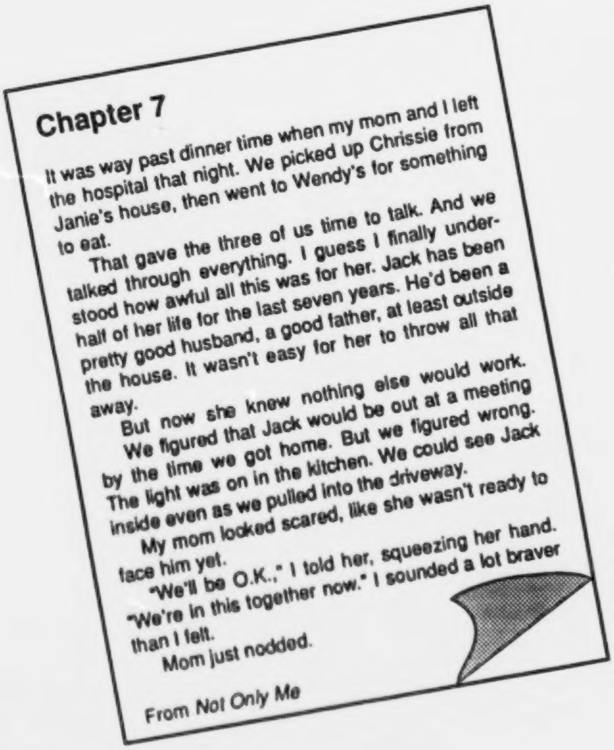
Literacy instructors and students have shown a lot of interest in *Not Only Me*. One instructor commented, "I liked the lean and forceful writing, the way the author provided just enough detail to establish the characters and setting. This book is very clear in making its point that the cover-up of sexual abuse only serves to perpetuate the problem and damage the lives of more children.

Literacy students have been enthusiastic in their comments:

- "I have never read such an intensifying book. It's simple, straightforward, understandable. There's truth, reality . . . The book serves as a tool to break out of the pattern of 'secrets'."
- "It's very dramatic and the narrator keeps you curious to continue reading the story."

There have been few negative comments about *Not Only Me*. One student was concerned that some people might find the subject upsetting. An instructor made the point that "the ending seemed too easy." But even these two felt the book was valuable for opening discussion and shedding some light on a topic that has been taboo for so long. Instructors who choose to use this book with students might find some helpful suggestions for dealing with the difficult subject of child abuse in the resource book, *Let the Healing Begin.*

Not Only Me comes in a pocketbook format with an appropriate print size and plenty of white space. Illustrations are included every few pages.



Chapter 7

It was way past dinner time when my mom and I left the hospital that night. We picked up Chrissie from Janie's house, then went to Wendy's for something to eat.

That gave the three of us time to talk. And we talked through everything. I guess I finally understood how awful all this was for her. Jack has been half of her life for the last seven years. He'd been a pretty good husband, a good father, at least outside the house. It wasn't easy for her to throw all that away.

But now she knew nothing else would work.

We figured that Jack would be out at a meeting by the time we got home. But we figured wrong. The light was on in the kitchen. We could see Jack inside even as we pulled into the driveway.

My mom looked scared, like she wasn't ready to face him yet.

"We'll be O.K.," I told her, squeezing her hand. "We're in this together now." I sounded a lot braver than I felt.

Mom just nodded.

From *Not Only Me*

Canada Votes: How We Elect Our Government

Author:	*Linda Granfield*
Publisher:	*Kids Can Press, 1990*
Available:	*Bookstores*
Price:	*$9.95*
Reviewed by:	***Maureen Stephens***
Level:	*Functional*
ISBN	*0-921103-88-3*

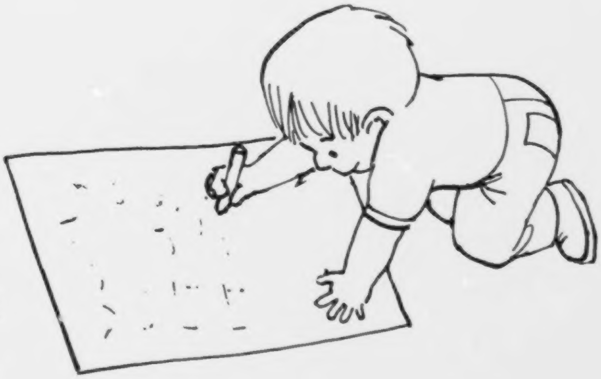
Canada Votes focuses on the federal election process and how we elect our federal government. This topic is difficult to make readable and interesting to fundamental students, but *Canada Votes* is a reference book that makes learning about federal politics fun. The book is divided into 19 sections. These sections deal with such topics as Who Can Vote?, Getting on A Voters' List, How Do I Look? (politicians and their image), etc. The topics do not follow any particular sequence. An informative glossary and index are at the back of the book. The layout of the book is very appealing to the adult reader. Comical cartoon illustrations appear on each page and break up the print. This book was used extensively by an English 670 class and their comments reflect its true value.

- "Now that I have been introduced to how election and Canadian politics operate, I look at politics more positively."
- "It is about time there was a book like this for people who are not strong readers, but who want to know more about government."
- "I feel that it got my interest up in wanting to learn more about today's politics."
- "I never cared for voting or government before. I wouldn't of even voted but I voted (B.C. election, October '91). I found it very interesting to see how the different parties started."

The Gift of Literacy: Books to Share with Children Bibliography

Author: *Terry Clark*
Available: *Vancouver Public Library,*
750 Burrard Street, Vancouver,
B.C. V6K 1C5
Reviewed by: ***Thomas Quigley***

Terry Clark, head of the library's Youth Division, created this bibliography as a book selection tool for Invergarry Learning Centre, and the Centre has graciously agreed to share it with any other group or individuals who might find it useful. It lists quality children's literature that adult learners might want to share with their children. Books were chosen on the basis of their appeal to adults, not kids. The 246 titles are presented in one sequence in alphabetical order by author. There are no annotations. Canadian titles are included, and are indicated in the list. All books were in print at the time the list was created; ordering information is included, with an emphasis on paperback editions.



The titles portray a wide variety of cultures and a broad range of lifestyles. While most are picture books at the Basic level, there are some controlled vocabulary readers and short children's novels at the Functional level.

You are welcome to come to the Vancouver Public Library and photocopy the list at your own cost. If that isn't possible, go to your local library and request this bibliography through interlibrary loan.

THE ROOTS OF LITERACY

The Roots of Literacy — *a family literacy symposium*

October 2 and 3, 1992
Brooks Campus, Medicine Hat College, Brooks, Alberta

featuring Ruth Nickse, Ph.D., family literacy researcher and author of "The Noises of Literacy: An overview of Intergenerational and Family Literacy Programs"

also:
- The foundations of family literacy
- Family literacy in Alberta: What's happening?
- The future of family literacy: Where to now?

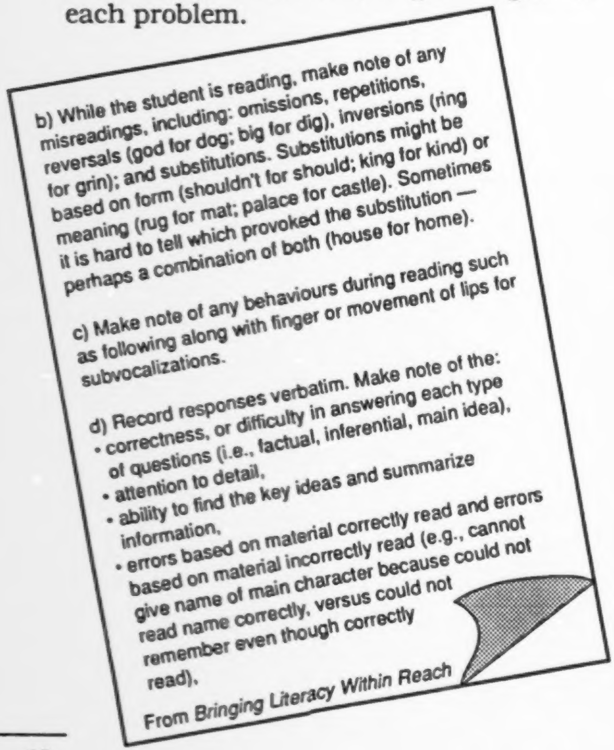
For further information contact:
The Roots of Literacy Symposium
Brooks Campus, MHC
200 Horticulture Road East
Brooks, Alberta T1R 1E5
(403) 362-7373

The following publications have been suggested and reviewed by Saskatchewan literacy practitioners and administrators. We hope you find them helpful as you plan your next course year. Where possible, we have listed prices and ISBN numbers. One or more of the following reading levels are indicated for most of these resources: Basic (meaning Grades 0-3); Functional (meaning Grades 4-5); and Independent (meaning Grades 7-9).

Bringing Literacy Within Reach: Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities

Publisher:	*Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 1991*
Available:	*323 Chapel Street, Suite 200,* *Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7Z2* *Telephone: (613) 238-5721*
Price:	*$25*
Reviewed by:	***Bobbie Baker***
Level:	*Any level*
ISBN:	*0-919053-25-4*

This 180-page book identifies and assists individuals with learning disabilities. Half the book is devoted to checklists and various tasks which discover exactly what students are able to do and where the problems lie. The remainder of the book describes practical teaching strategies for each problem.



b) While the student is reading, make note of any misreadings, including: omissions, repetitions, reversals (god for dog; big for dig), inversions (ring for grin); and substitutions. Substitutions might be based on form (shouldn't for should; king for kind) or meaning (rug for mat; palace for castle). Sometimes it is hard to tell which provoked the substitution — perhaps a combination of both (house for home).

c) Make note of any behaviours during reading such as following along with finger or movement of lips for subvocalizations.

d) Record responses verbatim. Make note of the:
- correctness, or difficulty in answering each type of questions (i.e., factual, inferential, main idea),
- attention to detail,
- ability to find the key ideas and summarize information,
- errors based on material correctly read and errors based on material incorrectly read (e.g., cannot give name of main character because could not read name correctly, versus could not remember even though correctly read).

From *Bringing Literacy Within Reach*

I use all or part of the screening questionnaire to assess most students. If a learning disability is suspected, I set up additional appointments for in-depth interviews using the checklists and performance tasks. The checklists provide a guideline to discover exactly how students learn and pinpoint the skills students do and do not possess. The students then understand how they can use existing strengths to learn more. They can also see their existing skills, and the ones they must work on. This is a good motivation and lets the students know they are not "dumb" and that the new tasks are finite.

One drawback is that the assessor must be familiar with the entire field of adult learning — barriers, processes and learning disabilities — to gain all the necessary information and to interpret the results to set up a program.

Global Stories of People Working for Change

Authors:	*June Dragman and Michael Szasy*
Publisher:	*CoDevelopment Canada*
Available:	*1672 East 10th Avenue,* *Vancouver, B.C. V5N 1X5*
Price:	*see ad, next page*
Reviewed by:	***Yvonne L. Ross***
Level:	*Functional*

This moderately-priced, soft cover reader is appropriate for ESL students at an intermediate level. It contains short stories from around the world about people working together to make their lives better. It also shows how Canadians support the plans of local people in other countries.

FINALLY!
AN ESL & LITERACY TEXT WITH AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Global Stories of People Working for Change is a unique and engaging textbook for ESL and literacy students. This 64-page book explores current international events and social issues using both personal and global perspectives.

- Written for intermediate level students
- Suitable for adult and high school learners
- Excellent selection of black & white photos

PRICE LIST

No. of copies	COST
1	$7.00 each
2 - 9	$4.00 each
10 - 19	$3.00 each
20 +	$2.00 each

Price includes postage & handling within Canada. Orders to overseas or the U.S will be charged additional postage

Please make cheque or money order payable to:
CoDevelopment Canada
1672 E. 10th Ave.
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V5N 1X5
Tel: (604) 873-5011
Fax: (604) 872-0709

I use the reader for oral and silent reading, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, making inferences, discussions on cultural differences and opinion stating.

Some of the vocabulary and concepts are difficult and it uses a lot of acronyms. Some people would find it too negative and political. For example, it is negative about free trade, government bureaucracy and women's hardships, and promotes unions to an extreme degree.

Reading for Concepts

Author:	*William Liddle*
Publisher:	*Phoenix Learning Resources, 1988*
Available:	*McGraw-Hill Ryerson,* *300 Water Street, Whitby,* *Ontario L1N 9B6* *Telephone: (416) 430-5000*
Price:	*$17.70 each (15% discount for educational institutions)*
Reviewed by:	***Carole Michaels***
Level:	*Basic, Functional and Independent*

This is a series of eight books that allows learners to work through increasingly more challenging reading levels. It gives learners the opportunity to expand their knowledge of history, biology, economics, anthropology, mathematics and geography. It has a repetitive, high interest format with short, factual stories for reading comprehension and factual questions after each story. It also allows the learner to work on competence with structural skills, inference making, finding main ideas and understanding vocabulary.

The Earl Was Busy

The Earl of Sandwich was busy. He was playing cards. He liked games. He played all day. He did not stop to eat. He played all night. He did not sleep.

At last the Earl was hungry. He did not want to take time for dinner.

"Bring me my meat," he said. "Put it between two pieces of bread."

The Earl ate his bread and meat. The meat did not get on his fingers. He kept on playing cards.

"That looks good," his friends thought. They put their meat between two pieces of bread, too. They liked the way it tasted. "What a wonderful way to eat," they said.

Other people liked this new way of eating, too. They wanted their bread and meat fixed the way the Earl of Sandwich had his. What did they ask for?

Find the Answers

1. The Earl asked for
   a) eggs and milk   b) cake
   c) meat between bread   d) apples

2. The word in the story that means *meat between slices of bread* is __________.

3. The story says, "The Earl of Sandwich was busy. *He* was playing cards." The word *he* means the __________.

4. Which of the following does this story lead you to believe?
   a) The Earl of Sandwich had no friends.
   b) The Earl of Sandwich was not a very smart man.
   c) The sandwich was named for an Earl of Sandwich.

From *Reading for Concepts*

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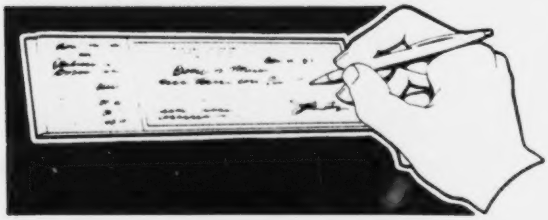


Money Makes Sense, Pacemaker Practical Arithmetic Series

Authors: Charles H. Kahn and J. Bradley Hanna
Publisher: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., Toronto, Ontario, 1982
Available: 2775 Matheson Boulevard East, Mississauga, Ontario L4W 4P7
Telephone: (416) 238-6074
Price: $14.38 (20% discount for educational institutions)
Reviewed by: ***T. Jelinski***
Level: Basic and Functional
ISBN: 077301465-9

This is a math series which consists of:

1. Money Makes Sense
2. Using Dollars and Sense
3. Working Makes Sense

This series deals extensively with Canadian coinage. It helps students recognize coins through visual lessons using pictures of actual-size coins. Students learn to identify coins, count money, make change and purchase goods.

I use the series as an individual math aid for students who require help in counting money and making correct change. We supplement this with actual hands-on money so that students are given an opportunity to reinforce their skills.

Money motivates us all! The coins are Canadian and life size. The situations are real and the problems are such that students can relate to them.

Writers' Voices Series

Publisher: Literacy Volunteers of New York City, 1991
Available: Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., 5795 Widewaters Parkway, Syracuse, New York, NY 13214
Telephone: (212) 925-3001
Price: US $3.50
Reviewed by: ***Roshan Hemani***
Level: Functional

This is a versatile series of popular works by contemporary writers, offering adult students high interest, low-level reading. It includes background to the stories, pre-reading and post-reading notes and a glossary, thus providing a sound framework for understanding and enjoying reading. This series works with learners because it has the look and feel of other popular novels, and offers an incredible variety of high interest material.

The following review is reprinted with permission from the March, 1992 issue of "Literacy Action," published by the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy.

Memories and Dreams, Volumes 1 and 2

Publisher: Saskatchewan Literacy Network, 1991
Available: Box 1520, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 3R5
Telephone: (306) 653-7178
Price: $5 per volume
Reviewed by: ***Anne Trussler***
Level: Functional

If you are teaching ESL students, these two books will appeal to them. They contain about 20 stories written by recent immigrants to Canada. ESL students will like the stories. I asked two to read them and give their opinions. They liked them because the stories described experiences and emotions that they themselves have had, for example, homesickness, financial problems, and the constant struggle to make a new life. Their only criticism of the stories was the similarity of them all.

The two students I interviewed said that they really like to write and talk about their lives here. Therefore, as a teacher, I would first of all brainstorm about students' experiences in Canada and then read a couple of the stories.

Follow up orally with a comparison of their experiences and the writers'. Next have them write about this comparison. You could follow up by typing the stories to share with other students.

Why not do a lesson on emotions? Develop vocabulary together to express emotions and then look for different emotions expressed in the stories.

Isn't the weather a constant complaint in the west? The many comments in the stories on the weather will lead to a good discussion and a lot of opinions to write about.

The books offer a very positive attitude towards Canada and are written in simple English. A few words are difficult, but generally the stories are written for a high basic, low intermediate ESL student who reads at about a Grade 4 level.

Don't just let your students read them, but use them to get your students to write and talk about what they know best: themselves.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network needs funds for the publication of *Struggles and Growth,* Volumes 1 to 3.

These are writings by learners.
Cost for the publication of
each volume is $2,700.
All donations are tax deductible.

Send cheques to the:
Saskatchewan Literacy Network
(indicate for *Struggles and Growth*)
P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 3R5.

Fundamentals of English Grammar (second edition)

Author:	*Betty Schrampfer Azar*
Publisher:	*Prentice Hall Canada, 1992*
Available:	*Prentice Hall Canada, ESL Division, 1870 Birchmount Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1P 2J7* *Telephone: (416) 293-3621*
Price:	*$35.33 ($26.50 for educational institutions)*
Reviewed by:	***Bobbie Baker***
Level:	*Basic to Functional*
ISBN:	*0133327507*

This text concisely explains the fundamentals of grammar and provides excellent guided practice in its everyday use. It uses common language in believeable, informal, adult situations. It is suitable for newcomers with limited skills as well as for individuals who are perfecting their speech. It provides instruction information, guided practice and excellent suggestions for student-initiated dialogues. It seems to clarify grammar in a way no other text has done.

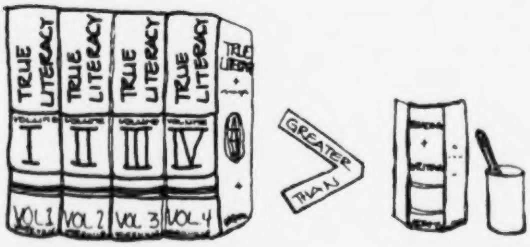
In Your Own Words — A Writing Skills Program for Adults, Volumes 1 and 2

Authors:	*Seymour Goldberg and Jack Norman*
Publisher:	*Cambridge — The Adult Education Company*
Available:	*888 7th Avenue, New York, NY 10106* *Telephone: (201) 592-3267 (extension 4358)*
Price:	*US $4.50*
Reviewed by:	***T. Jelinski***
Level:	*Basic and Functional*
ISBN:	*Vol. 1 — 0842-897291* *Vol. 2 — 0842-897305*

This is quite a structured workbook that aids adult students in learning the process of writing. It helps students learn to write better sentences and to revise and edit them.

I've used it with students who are just learning to write but can speak English fluently. There is a brief introduction in each chapter with a summary and easy-to-understand concepts. Exercises are provided for reinforcement and a contextual writing activity brings it all together at the end. I use it with students who can work independently and for small group teacher-directed lessons.

The exercises in this publication work because they are directly related to adult experiences and thus succeed in motivating the students. They do not burden students with technical explanations but give basic instructions with opportunities to apply the concepts.



Spellbound — Phonic Reading and Spelling

Author: *Elsie T. Rak*
Publisher: *Educators Publishing Service, Inc., 1977 (Workbook), 1981 (Teacher's Manual)*
Available: *1100 Birchmount Road,*
Scarborough, Ontario M1K 5H9
Telephone: (416) 755-0591
Price: *Workbook — one to five copies $9.70, six or more copies $2.25; Teacher's Manual — $6.05*
Reviewed by: ***Bobbie Baker***
Level: *Basic*

This is a student workbook plus a teacher's manual which teaches spelling by grouping words according to rules. It is designed for adults who read at a low level and can be used independently or with a tutor. I use it specifically for students whose spelling skills are much lower than their reading abilities and who need a great deal of practice in order to remember. Rules are clearly explained and illustrated. Each rule or exception is practiced many times.

This book cannot be used in its entirety by students with average spelling ability as the practice is tedious. However, it can be adapted for their use.

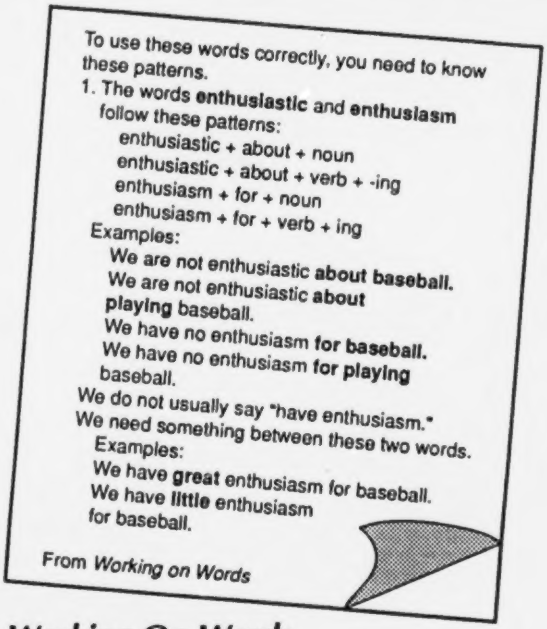
The Spell of Words

Author: *Elsie T. Rak*
Publisher: *Educators Publishing Service, Inc., 1979 (Workbook), 1984 (Teacher's Guide)*
Available: *1100 Birchmount Road,*
Scarborough, Ontario M1K 5H9
Telephone: (416) 755-0591
Price: *Workbook — one to five copies $9.75, six or more copies $7.25; Teacher's Manual — $5.30*
Reviewed by: ***Bobbie Baker***
Level: *Independent*

This is a student workbook plus a teacher's guide which teaches spelling to people who have developmental dislexia, or to any poor spellers. The rules are clearly explained and illustrated. Sufficient practice exercises are provided.

As it uses fairly difficult words for illustration and practice, it is used mainly with students reading above a Grade 4 level. They can use it with a tutor or independently.

The rules, the way they are presented, the types of practice exercises, and the types of words themselves are all geared to people who need specific methods before spelling can make sense to them and before they can remember how to spell.



To use these words correctly, you need to know these patterns.

1. The words **enthusiastic** and **enthusiasm** follow these patterns:
   enthusiastic + about + noun
   enthusiastic + about + verb + -ing
   enthusiasm + for + noun
   enthusiasm + for + verb + ing

Examples:

We are not enthusiastic **about baseball.**
We are not enthusiastic **about playing** baseball.
We have no enthusiasm **for baseball.**
We have no enthusiasm **for playing** baseball.

We do not usually say "have enthusiasm." We need something between these two words.

Examples:

We have **great** enthusiasm for baseball.
We have **little** enthusiasm for baseball.

From *Working on Words*

Working On Words

Authors:	*John F. Canney, J. Philip Goldberg and Diane D. O'Connor*
Publisher:	*Gallaudet College Press, 1981*
Available:	*800 Florida Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-3695* *Telephone: (202) 651-5488*
Price:	*US $19.95 (10% discount for schools and libraries)*
Reviewed by:	***Carole Michaels***
Level:	*Functional and Independent*
ISBN	*0-913580-72-4*

This workbook focuses on vocabulary development. Each lesson includes word definitions, parts of speech, sentence usage and examples. Students are asked to use the new words in controlled exercises and finally in a free writing assignment. I've found this publication extremely useful for work with ESL students, aboriginal students, and all students with limited vocabulary. The exercises are particularly useful for developing correct sentence structure. The workbook includes comprehensive information with extensive opportunities to use the new words in a variety of exercises. It can also be used by students at home.

Pronunciation Curriculum for Beginning and Intermediate Students of English as a Second Language

Author:	*Eva Williams*
Publisher:	*ESL — Vocational Department, Vancouver Community College, 1985*
Available:	*King Edward Campus Bookstore, 1155 East Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1Y8* *Telephone: (604) 871-7333*
Price:	*$2.50 per level; $49 for complete five-level set including teacher's guide*
Reviewed by:	***Bobbie Baker***
Level:	*Basic and Functional*

This is a five-level curriculum which provides instruction and practice activities in listening, speaking, spelling and dictionary use (as it relates to pronunciation). Each level has teacher's notes and alternate lessons for additional practice. As the lessons are short, they can be incorporated into each classroom or tutorial session.

This structured curriculum is easily used by tutors and easily understood by students. Unfortunately, it doesn't include diagrams to show how each sound is actually produced.

Reading and Critical Thinking Book 2

Authors:	*Donald L. Barnes and Arlene Burgdorf*
Publisher:	*Educational Design Inc., 1988*
Available:	*Monarch Books of Canada, 5000 Dufferin Street, Unit K, Downsview, Ontario M3H 5T5* *Telephone: (416) 663-8231*
Price:	*$7.95*
Reviewed by:	***Bobbie Baker***
Level:	*Independent*
ISBN:	*0876940009*

This book explains the various comprehension skills in such a way that the reader understands how to do them and why they are necessary for reading. Explanations and examples are followed by a short story, questions and an answer key. The book can be used in a class, a tutorial or independently. The explanations of each skill are clear and seem to make sense to the students. The stories and practice exercises are short, interesting and varied.

This is an excellent resource, but it is unfortunate that it is written only for an independent reading level.

Reading from Scratch

Author:	*Dorothy van den Honert*
Publisher:	*Educators Publishing Service Inc., 1986*
Available:	*1100 Birchmount Road, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 5H9* *Telephone: (416) 755-0591*
Price:	*$44.80 for complete set; books can also be purchased individually*
Reviewed by:	***T. Jelinski***
Level:	*Functional*
ISBN:	*81755*

This is a reading series which includes:

1. Word Lists and Sentences for Dictation
2. Workbook I (student)
3. Workbook II (student)
4. Words, Lists, Phrases and Sentences for Reading
5. Teacher's Manual

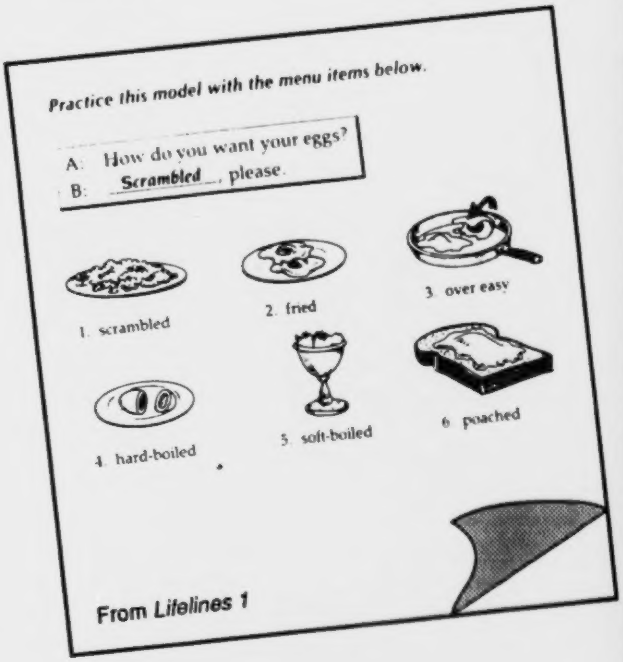
It's a structured reading program for a new reader who is in a one-to-one or small group situation which allows for maximum listening and speaking. Students learn through specific listening exercises with opportunities to decode sounds and letters.

The series works because it is fairly structured and sequential. Students are given the opportunity to interact with the instructor or tutor thus allowing for continual feedback.

Lifelines 1 (second edition)

Publisher:	*Prentice Hall Canada, 1992*
Available:	*Prentice Hall Canada, ESL Division, 1870 Birchmount Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1P 2J7* *Telephone: (416) 293-3621*
Price:	*$18 ($13.50 for educational institutions)*
Reviewed by:	***Bobbie Baker***
Level:	*Basic to Functional*
ISBN:	*0135295386*

These four workbooks integrate life skills with language, vocabulary and cultural information. The information, words, structures and practice exercises are simple, relevant and clearly laid out. They are well illustrated and provide some speaking, reading and writing practice with emphasis on vocabulary and grammar. I use the workbooks as a basis for instruction in part-time classes and tutorials, but find I need to supplement them with additional information and exercises.

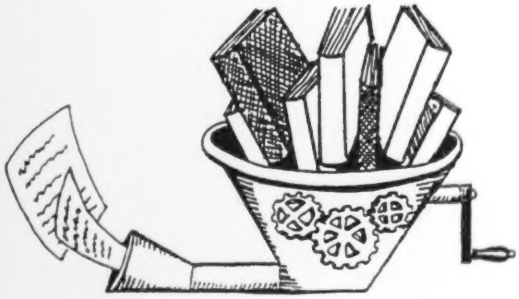


Practice this model with the menu items below.

A: How do you want your eggs?
B: **Scrambled**, please.

1. scrambled
2. fried
3. over easy
4. hard-boiled
5. soft-boiled
6. poached

From *Lifelines 1*



Laubach Way to Reading Series

Authors: *Frank C. Laubach, Elizabeth Mooney Kirk and Robert S. Laubach*
Publisher: *New Readers Press, 1982 (revised, 1991)*
Available: *Laubach Literacy of Canada,*
P.O. Box 6548, Station A, Saint John, New Brunswick E2L 4R9
Telephone: (506) 634-1980
Price: *moderately priced, varies from level to level*
Reviewed by: ***Bobbie Baker***
Level: *Basic*

This is a four-level series including workbooks, teachers' manuals and correlated readers for each level. It teaches phonics and methods for analyzing words into their component parts (and putting them together again) in a structured, sequential manner. It presents information in very small units and provides a lot of repetition and practice.

The series is too slow-paced for the average learner. It is best used in tutorials with older students who have few skills. These include ESL students who have few literacy skills in their own language. The older students seem to need the structured, slow-paced approach. Although the majority of the reading is designed to reinforce the phonics lesson, reading for everyday life sections (for example, menus), is included in each chapter.

Word Attack Plus

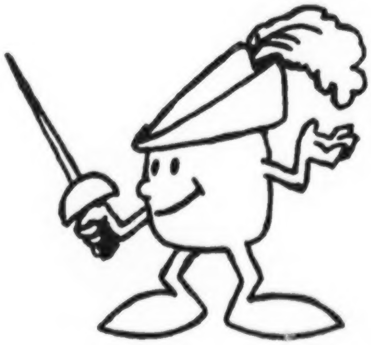
Publisher: *Davidson and Associates, Inc., 1988*
Available: *P.O. Box 2961, Torrance,*
California 90509
Telephone: (310) 793-0600
Canadian distributor: Beamscope, 35 Ironside Crescent, Scarborough, Ontario
M1X 1G5
Telephone: 800-268-5535
Price: *US $49.95*
Reviewed by: ***Bobbie Baker***
Level: *Functional and Independent*

This is an IBM compatible computer program which presents 700 words representing 10 levels of difficulty. Students can work on it alone or in pairs to build their vocabulary and improve their reading rate. Both ABE and ESL students benefit from its use.

Five main activities provide sufficient and varied practice. The activities are: word display (the word, its meaning, and a sentence illustrating its use), a multiple choice quiz, sentence completion, word matching, and an arcade type of game.

The program is easy to use, fun and challenging. All the words, along with a brief meaning, are listed in the guide. It prints out the problem words for at-home practice.

The program lacks a pronunciation guide, which ESL students have said they would find helpful.



Basic ESL Resources

Regina ESL teacher ***Elizabeth Slater*** *recommends the following resources. All are at a basic level.*

New Herizons in English, Book 1 (third edition)

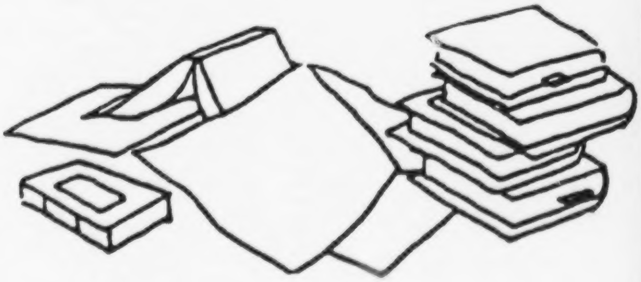
Author: *Michael Mellgnen*
Publisher: *Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1991*
Available: *School Division, Box 580, 26 Prince Andrew Place, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 2T8*
Telephone: (416) 447-6480
Price: *Text – $12.17; Workbook – $6.94; Teacher's Guide – $16.47 (15% discount available for educational institutions)*
ISBN: *Textbook – 53500; Workbook – 53502; Teacher's Guide – 53501*

I use this textbook and workbook to teach basic English to ESL students. It has good illustrations and is well laid out. Five other levels are available in this series.

Focus on Phonics – 1

Author: *Gail V. Rice*
Publisher: *New Readers Press, 1983 (revised, 1991)*
Available: *Laubach Literacy of Canada, P.O. Box 6548, Station A, Saint John, New Brunswick E5L 4R9*
Telephone: (506) 634-1980
Price: *Workbook – $5.30; Teacher's Manual – $8.35*

This is a series of phonics workbooks correlated to the Laubach Way to Reading (see review, page 17). I use it to reenforce basic sounds and for pronunciation drills and spelling



Jazz Chants

Author: *Carolyn Graham*
Publisher: *Oxford University Press, 1978*
Available: *70 Wynford Drive, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 1J9*
Telephone: (416) 441-2941
Price: *$20.95 (20% discount available for educational institutions)*
ISBN: *19-5024079*

This includes a book and tape on rhythms of American English for ESL students. I use it as a supplementary activity to provide a change of pace. It's fun, meaningful and practical.

Everyday English Book 1

Authors: *David Krulik and Barbara Zaffran*
Publisher: *National Textbook Company, 1991*
Available: *Voluntad Publishers Inc., National Textbook Company, Division of NTC Publishing Group, 4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, Illinois 60646-1975*
Telephone: (708) 679-5500
Price: *US $7.95 American*

This workbook teaches basic vocabulary in a theme structure. The illustrations are good and students enjoy the puzzles.

Grammar Work Book 1 – English Exercises in Context (first edition)

Author: *Pamela Breyer*
Publisher: *Prentice Hall Canada, 1982*
Available: *1870 Birchmount Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1P 2J7*
Telephone: (416) 293-3621
Price: *$15 ($11.25 for educational institutions)*
ISBN: *0133622789*

This workbook includes basic grammar exercises that are well organized with good examples. It has clear directions that are easy to follow.

Images — English for Beginners, Book 1

Author: *Guenther Zuern*
Publisher: *Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1985*
Available: *School Division, Box 580, 26 Prince Andrew Place, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 2T8*
Telephone: (416) 447-6480
Price: *$11.23 (15% discount available for educational institutions)*
ISBN: *90804*

This book is for students who have no previous knowledge of English. I use it to teach basic functions, guided conversation and listening exercises. The photographs are excellent and convey real-life situations. The accompanying audio tapes are very good. The dialogues are based on realistic situations. The book and tapes are good for multi-level classroom use.

Survival English — English Through Conversations

Authors: *Lee Mosteller and Bobbi Paul*
Publisher: *Prentice Hall Canada, 1985*
Available: *1870 Birchmount Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1P 2J7*
Telephone: (416) 293-3621
Price: *$16.67 ($12.50 for educational institutions)*
ISBN: *0138791724*

This is a workbook with basic conversations organized by theme. I use it to stimulate conversations and for guided conversations. The book is well organized with good illustrations. The vocabulary is very basic and the grammar exercises are well laid out.

Do you have ideas for Literacy Works?

Issues planned for the
1992-93 year include:
Literacy and New Canadians
Literacy and Learning Disabilities

If you would like to contribute ideas or articles for these issues, if you have ideas for themes for other issues, or if you are interested in taking part in our editorial committee, please feel free to contact the Saskatchewan Literacy Network office in Saskatoon, or call the editor, Liz Ormiston, at 757-7236 in Regina.

Family Literacy: American Style

__Nayda Veeman__, executive director of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, attended the First National Conference on Family Literacy in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, April 12 to 14. Here, she reports on some of the highlights. A longer version of this article will appear in Query, Volume 21, Number 3, 1992.

Why the need for a strong focus on family literacy in the United States? Sharon Darling, executive director of the National Center for Family Literacy, which has played a key role in encouraging the development of family literacy programs through the United States, had this to say at the conference:

"23 million Americans do not have adequate literacy skills after a decade of educational reform and early childhood programs for the disadvantaged. Therefore, the focus of educational intervention must shift from one which isolates children and adults to once which focuses on the family. The parents must be encouraged to develop positive attitudes toward education."

The conference provided the first opportunity for practitioners, administrators and researchers from a diversity of programs and locales to meet and share ideas about family literacy. The 45 participants came from as far away as Hawaii, Alaska and England as well as from across mainland USA. Canadians from Ontario, B.C. and Saskatchewan attended.

The conference was divided into three streams: research, policy and practice. Following are some highlights.

Research

"While family literacy is very important, it should not be thought of as a 'silver bullet' which will solve all problems and ensure success; many factors contribute to a child's achievement, the literacy level of parents being only one. For programs to be successful, it is critical that parents be involved in planning and deciding on their own goals." — Heather Weiss, Direct Harvard Family Research Project

"In dysfunctional families, we need to consider the possible role which older siblings can play since parents may be unwilling/unable to participate because of drug or alcohol problems; 12-24 year olds should be considered as possible partners in family literacy programs." — Shirley Brice Heath, anthropological linguist, Stanford University

"There are very significant differences in the achievement of minorities in different cultural settings. The historical relationship of the minority to the dominant group is important. For example, Jamaicans do much better in the USA than they do in England. Immigrants and refugees also differ reflecting the fact that immigrants choose their new home whereas refugees do not." — John Ogbu, Professor of Anthropology, University of California

"It is important that programs are developmentally appropriate since research indicates that very directive preschool programs may result in more alienation and juvenile delinquency. In addition, students sometimes do very well in very poor school situations, for example, Vietnamese boat children in slum city schools with disruptive peers. The importance which family places on education seems to be more important than external factors." — David Weikart, President, High/Scope Education Research Foundation

Practice

What is family literacy? Sharon Darling spoke about the Keenan Model of Family Literacy, which comprises the following elements:

1. An adult education component in which parents participate in literacy activities which may include prevocational, parenting or literacy upgrading training.
2. An early childhood component for children from birth to seven years of age.
3. A parent/child interaction component in which there is reciprocal learning and teaching.
4. A parent/parent interaction component where parents can support each other, learn about and discuss life and parenting issues.

According to Darling, successful programs involve the collaboration of adult educators, teachers, community agencies and business. For example, Toyota corporation has provided $225,000 in a three-year grant to each of five cities to establish family literacy programs. A prerequisite for Toyota grants is a commitment by local groups to commit their own time and money to the program.

Policy

I have chosen to include only one policy issue which has relevance for Canada. It is essential to decide who will define the goals of family literacy programs. Adults do want to help their children but they may not realistically see much chance of improving their job prospects through literacy; their goals may be limited to being able to help their children. Politicians and the business community argue for improved literacy levels in order to improve the skills of workers and thereby enhance productivity. Program evaluation will depend on who sets the goals.

***Note:** The Saskatchewan Literacy Network office now has a number of resources on family literacy. These are available on loan to Network members and may be used in the office by non-members.*

Annual General Meeting and Conference

Mark your calender now
so you can attend the
Saskatchewan Literacy Network AGM
and Conference at the
Saskatoon Inn on September 26.

Don't stop there.
Mark the evening of September 25
and join us for the opening reception!

Watch for further details in the
upcoming *What's News* monthly flyer.
See you there!

A learner's perspective on family literacy

By Tony Spencer

I feel literacy problems do pass from generation to generation. I know in my family of eight, reading is a problem for six of us. My mother had Grade 3 and my father Grade 12. Back in those days it was up to the father to be the bread winner and that's exactly what he did. Now, going back even further, my grandmother on my mother's side only had her Grade 3 so already we have started problems.

How can we encourage our own children or provide help when we were not shown how? We never had story telling or story albums which I think would of helped. I remember wanting so bad to learn and be like the rest of the kids, but that was never to be possible for me as a child. I used to ask to stay after school for more help but no one had the time. I felt stupid because I never knew what was going on. I felt different. I didn't fit in, in any of my five grades. Yes, I spent two years in Grade 4 and two in Grade 5 and then I quit. I remember they brought in a slower class but would not allow me to enter it. I believe that had something to do with my Indian background. I guess I haven't mentioned my mother was Indian but my father was Irish and English, so it's hard to tell by looking at me that there is Indian blood, so we were not too popular at the school.

So for 38 years I went though life pretending I could read the menus, taking work home every night so I could have it translated so I could understand what was expected of me. A lot of engery went into keeping a job and it was very stressful finding out the truth about me.

Now, I have two children of my own and the first one suffered in school for the first five years for the same reasons I did. When I realized that I was watching my life repeat itself though him then I decided to get help for him and me. I went back to school and spent a lot of time getting him the help he needed in school and at home. I worked hard with the teachers so they helped me help him. And then I realized I broke the pattern of my past. My second child had it much easier with more support. By this time the problem of knowing how to read was getting better.

In my family of eight, we were discouraged to learn. In my family today, my boys are encourged. My 19-year-old graduated last year and now is talking about going back to school for he feels he doesn't know enough. My 15-year-old in Grade 9 works very hard for he has seen how hard myself and his brother had to work. He's talking university. I don't need to fight with them to learn and I'm sure that's partly because I'm continuing to learn myself, and they are following that pattern instead of the drop out pattern. I used to feel like such a failure in life but today I feel I will never fail as long as I keep trying.

I believe the change needs to start somewhere if we are not happy and if we can find the strength within ourselves for the fight ahead it's well worth it. Today I know that I am never alone. Maybe I am alone to do the foot work, but I always know there is a power greater than myself guiding me and I think that's what gives me my strength to carry on. I'm very grateful for all the support I have received from the Bridging Program. Without them I still would have been fighting for my dreams to come true. Thank You.

***Tony Spencer** is a learner in the Bridging Program for Women in Regina. We apologize that we were unable to publish Tony's article in the Spring issue of* Literacy Works, *which focused on family literacy.*

MCL LINK

By Elsie Livingston

I feel a sense of excitement as I plan for the June Board meeting of the Movement for Canadian Literacy! For the first time, I will be joined by two others from this province: Alan Kobe, board member and Roy Bourke, president. Saskatchewan is contributing a generous share of leadership on the national scene for adult literacy and adult basic education.

In spite of cutbacks in grants from the Literacy Secretariat, the executive and administration personnel have been busy, cementing partnerships with the Canadian Alliance for Literacy (CAL). CAL is a united lobby group for national bodies interested in adult education. It is neutral politically and is, therefore, effective in scrutinizing the policy and actions of government without the threat of budget cuts. MCL plays a strong leadership role in CAL.

MCL board members and staff have undertaken to collect and draft responses to the Employment and Immigration Canada policy papers "Employment Policy on Worker Literacy" and "Learning Well . . . Living Well" from the Prosperity Secretariat.

In February, the Prosperity Secretariat held a National Consultation, "Round Table on Learning." Eighty people from all sectors of society were invited to attend. MCL appointed delegates Jerry Lee Miller from Toronto and Lynda Mageri from North Battleford to represent adult learners, and Robin Stonehouse from Saskatoon, a past president of MCL.

MCL works in close conjunction with the National Literacy Secretariat, our major funding body. Communication with the Secretary of State, the Hon. Gerry Weiner, and the Minister of Employment and Immigration, the Hon. Bernard Valcourt, helps them keep a finger on the pulse of adult education.

My work with the policy committee will focus on the "Discussion Document for Good Practice." Please get your individual or group responses to the MCL office by October.

***Elsie Livingston** is Saskatchewan Representative to the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL).*

Organizing Adult Literacy and Basic Education in Canada
A policy and practice discussion document

Single copies are available free from:
Elsie Livingston
MCL Provincial Representative
#101 – 699 28th Street West
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan S6V 6K5
Telephone: (306) 763-7745

For multiple copies (available at cost plus shipping) contact:
The Movement for Canadian Literacy
880 Wellington Street
Suite 500
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6K7
Telephone: (613) 563-2464

Letters to Literacy Works

Dear Literacy Works:

I am forwarding information on a recent event held by the Literacy Program of Southeast Regional College which you may wish to share with Network members.

In recognition of Education Week and to celebrate our move to a new office within the Souris Valley Campus at Weyburn we held a coffee party on March 10. Staff, instructors and students were invited to drop by to see the facility, look at the displays and to enjoy coffee and cake.

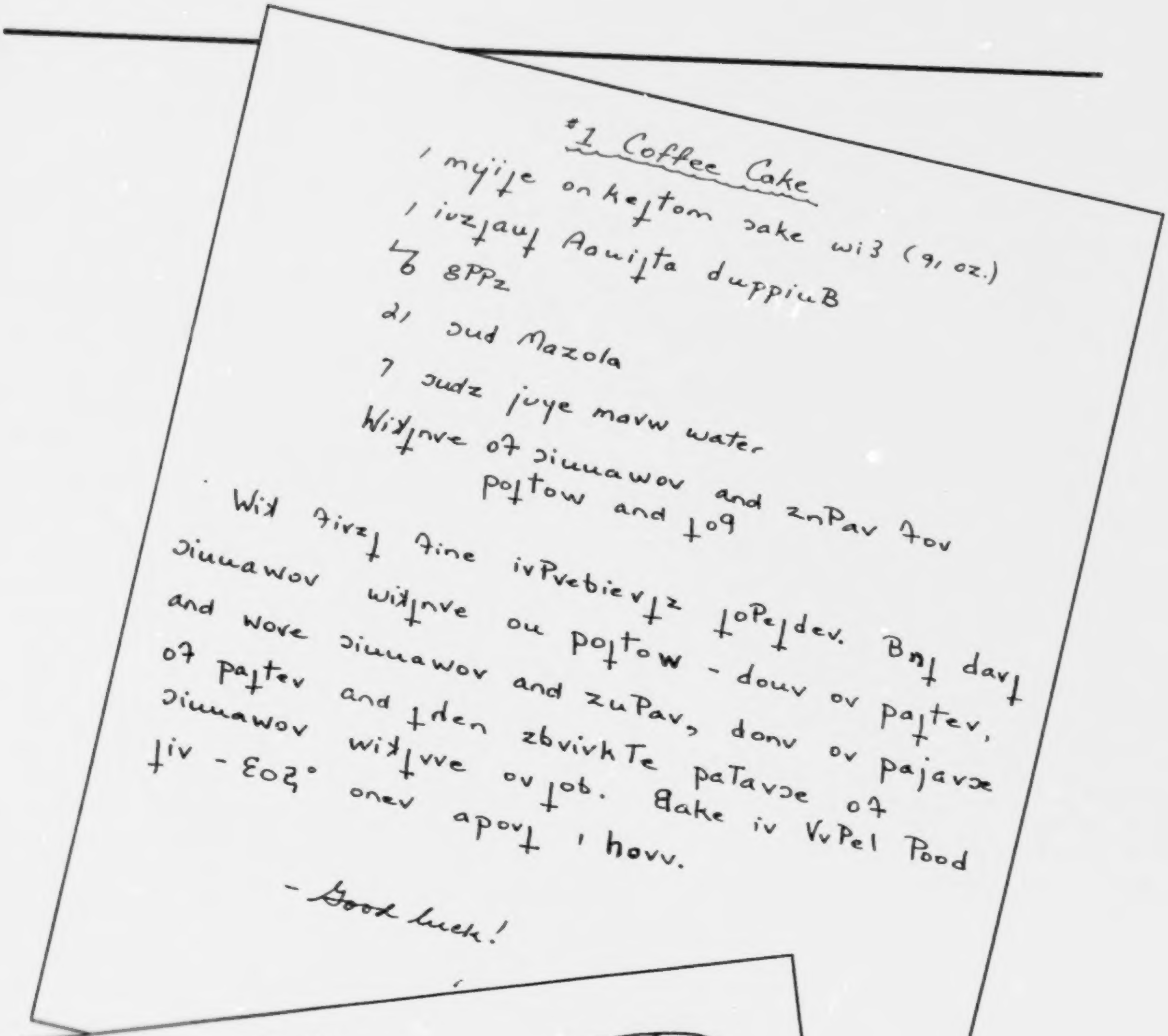
Copies of the recipe for the cake were available. What a letdown when people discovered they couldn't read the directions! "This is the most frustrating thing that's ever happened to me," exclaimed one would-be cook. "This cake is so good, and I don't know how to make it!" Some people tossed the recipe aside; a determined few set to work to decode the instructions and nearly everyone got the message that not being able to read could be a problem for even the simple everyday tasks. (A few days later a memo was circulated with the actual recipe and the added thought that perhaps whenever the baker prepared this "literacy cake" it would be a reminder of the difficulties the non-reader faces.)

This cake recipe is a hand-out I plan to use when addressing ladies' groups and I am pleased to share this idea with anyone who may be able to use this as a means of getting the literacy message across.

Also attached is the recipe in its original form — a 30-year-old stand-by from my family recipe box. Bake and enjoy! Perhaps each time you do make this cake you will think of the frustration, embarrassment and limitations that people who do not read or who have poor literacy skills experience in their daily lives.

Sincerely,

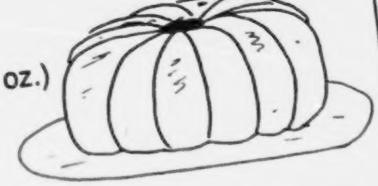
Jacqueline Lenz
Acting Literacy Coordinator
Souris Valley Campus, Weyburn



#1 Coffee Cake

– Good luck!

#1 Coffee Cake



1 white or yellow cake mix (19 oz.)
1 instant vanilla pudding
4 eggs
1/2 cup mazola
1 cup luke warm water
Mixture of cinnamon and sugar for bottom, middle and top

Mix first five ingredients together. Put part cinnamon mixture on bottom; pour on batter. Add more cinnamon and sugar, pour on balance of batter and then sprinkle balance of cinnamon mixture on top.

Bake in Angel Food tin — 350°F oven for about 1 hour.

NETWORK NEWS — Summer, 1992

1. **Board News**

The 1992 AGM and conference will be held in Saskatoon on September 25 and 26. The Network board is now calling for nominations. Please consider putting your name forward. For more details see page 27.

The board is pleased to announce that the AGM is being held in conjunction with the AGM of Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English Speakers (SCENES). The Network and SCENES have been sharing clerical support staff since January and we look forward to ongoing collaboration in future.

1992-93 project proposals are ready for submission to the National Literacy Secretariat. Details will be published as soon as funding is approved. The board has been working to diversify its funding sources and to reduce expenses. A recommendation has been made that *What's News* no longer be circulated on a complimentary basis. A final decision will be made at the June board meeting.

2. **Learner Support**

The Learners Committee has plans well underway for "Learners Today: Leaders Tomorrow," the provincial leadership conference for learners. Please note a change in the dates: Thursday, October 15 to Saturday, October 17.

The registration fee of $10 will include a one year subscription to *On Our Way*. All meals and accommodation at the conference will be paid by the Network. Travel expenses and a subsidy for child care will be available upon request.

Committee members are available to explain and promote the conference at regional meetings. The selection of regional delegates will take place in September; selection will be made by committee members and Literacy Coordinators. If you or someone you know would be interested in attending, please contact the Network office so that we can put you in touch with the Literacy Coordinator in your region.

3. **Family Literacy**

The Mayfair Literacy Project is nearing the end of its first year. Barb Wright, the Grade 5 teacher who carried out the project, remarks that her students are now "readers," reading for enjoyment and with improved attention spans.

Thanks to the Mayfair Public Library, the Soroptomists of Saskatoon, the Star Phoenix, READ Canada and Westgate Books for their support of the project. The Saskatoon and District Reading Council gave its 1992 Celebrate Literacy Award to Barb Wright, Georgie Kyle of the Star Phoenix and Nayda Veeman of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network for the Mayfair Project.

There is growing awareness of how important parents are in the education of their children. At the same time, many educators do not seem to be aware of Canadian literacy statistics and of their impact on student achievement. The Network will continue to work toward greater awareness and to foster cooperation between the K-12 system and adult education.

Congratulations to the South Saskatchewan Reading Council on a very successful and well organized conference. One keynote speaker emphasized the important role which parents play in education of their children. The next task will be to raise awareness about the number of parents who lack sufficient literacy skills to be involved with the education system.

It is an interesting coincidence that the school dropout rate is around 30 per cent and around 25 per cent of Canadian adults are less than functionally literate. It would be interesting to know the literacy levels of the parents of dropouts since every indication is that literacy problems are intergenerational.

4. **Prairie Literacy Institute, July 13 to 24, Saskatoon**

   The Network welcomes Nicole Staresina, a summer student hired as conference assistant. Nicole will complete planning and organization of the Institute. It promises to be an excellent event and we are looking forward to meeting all the registrants.

5. **Thank You !!!!**

   The board wishes to thank SaskTel for a donation of $600. This will help us to upgrade our computer equipment with the establishment of a provincial literacy database in Saskatchewan.

   Union leaders have donated $450 to the publication of *On Our Way*, and donations are still coming in! Thanks to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour for publicizing this need.

Call for Nominations

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network takes pride in having a board of directors that includes: learners, people from colleges, school districts and community-based programs, libraries, business, labour, and other interest groups. This diversity serves us well, so we can serve your literacy needs.

We continue to need people like you on the Saskatchewan Literacy Network board. Consider joining us in September!

For more information and to receive a nomination form contact::

SLN office in Saskatoon at
653-7368 or 653-7178

Lillis Lawrence in Prince Albert
at 953-8500

Doreen Anderson in Saskatoon
at 242-5122

Prairie Literacy Institute

July 13 to 24, 1992
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

Fee: $200

Three courses and an exciting series of afternoon seminars are offered. A few spaces are still available.

For information call Nicole at the Saskatchewan Literacy Network office in Saskatoon, 653-3290.

*Peter Dubois, president of the **Saskatchewan Literacy Network**, accepts a donation of $735 from Maureen Taylor of CBC's The Morning Edition.*

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

1. The **Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit Dinner** will be held in Regina August 12. The Annual Gowski Golf Tournament will be held August 13, also in Regina. For more information and tickets contact Joan Bernston at 652-9029.

2. **Sylvia Vicq**, Literacy Coordinator of READ Saskatoon, was named Woman of the Year at the Annual Awards dinner of the YWCA. Congratulations Sylvia!

3. **Rosemary Sturge Isfan** will be retiring from her position at SIAST Wascana at the end of June. Rosemary has worked in adult education for many years; she served on the SABEA executive and on the board of the Network in 1990-91. We hope that she will still have time for literacy in some capacity. Thanks and best wishes Rosemary!

4. Southeast Regional College has established the **Io Powell Award** in honour of long time educator Io Powell who retired last year. The award will be made annually to a student or tutor involved in literacy or adult basic education in the Southeast region.

It's Membership Renewal Time!

Dear Literacy Works Reader:

Just a brief note to remind you that your Saskatchewan Literacy Network membership/subscription will expire in September, 1992. Renew now and be sure to receive the upcoming four issues of this interesting and informative journal. In the 1992-93 year we will focus on such topics as Literacy and Learning Disabilities and Literacy and New Canadians.Your continued support is very important to us!

Please fill in the attached form and renew your membership today.

Help us to keep building a strong Network for Literacy in Saskatchewan!

1992/93 Membership/Subscription Request Form

(includes 4 issues of *Literacy Works*)

Name: ______________________________

Occupation: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

City: ____________________ Postal Code: ____________________

Home Phone: ____________________ Work Phone: ____________________

Employer/School: ______________________________

Please indicate type of payment:

________ General Membership: $20 – 1 copy of *Literacy Works Journal* per quarterly issue.

________ Student Membership: $10 – 1 copy of *On Our Way* plain English newspaper monthly (9 issues).

________ Subscription Only: $20 – 1 copy of *Literacy Works Journal* per quarterly issue.

________ Donation – Charitable Registration number 0896225-21 (receipts issued)

Actual cost annually to produce quarterly journal for one subscription is $50, so please consider making a donation to cover costs.

Mail with your completed cheque or money order to:
Saskatchewan Literacy Network, PO Box 1520, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 3R5